

# Raw Milk: What You Need to Know

Raw milk is milk that comes straight from a cow, sheep, or goat. Raw milk is not pasteurized (heated to kill germs) or homogenized (processed to keep the cream from separating from the milk).

## Is raw milk safe to drink?

Raw milk is not safe to drink because it can carry harmful bacteria and other germs. Common harmful bacteria found in raw milk include *Campylobacter*, *Escherichia coli*, *Salmonella*, and *Listeria*.

Anyone can get sick from drinking raw milk or products made from raw milk. Raw milk may be contained in cream, cheeses, yogurt, ice cream, frozen yogurt, or pudding. Children, pregnant women, people with weakened immune systems, or older adults are more likely to get sick.

### Symptoms of illness include

- Diarrhea
- Stomach cramps
- Vomiting
- Flulike symptoms, such as fever, headache, and body ache

Although most healthy people get well, the symptoms can become chronic (long-term) or severe or may result in death.

## Call the doctor if . . .

- Anyone in your family becomes sick after drinking raw milk or eating products made from raw milk.
- Anyone in your family is pregnant and drinks raw milk or eats products made from raw milk. The bacteria *Listeria*, which is sometimes found in raw milk, can cause miscarriage, illness, or death of the newborn.

## Safety first

Here are food safety tips from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) fact sheet *Raw Milk: Know the Raw Facts*.

- Choose pasteurized milk and dairy products. Buy and eat products that say “pasteurized” on the label. If in doubt, don’t buy it!
- Refrigerate dairy products at 40 °F (4 °C) or below.
- Throw away any expired product.

## For More Information

American Academy of Pediatrics  
[www.aap.org](http://www.aap.org) and [www.HealthyChildren.org](http://www.HealthyChildren.org)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
[www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk)

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