

# Parent Food Safety Guide

for

# Raw Milk



## What is Raw Milk?

Raw or *unpasteurized milk* (sometimes called fresh milk or fresh unprocessed milk) is milk that comes directly from a cow's, goat's, sheep or other animal's udder, and is not heat-treated (pasteurized) to kill bacteria. Raw milk, cheese, ice cream and other dairy products made from raw milk may be rich in fats and flavor. But, raw milk products carry a much higher risk of contamination with harmful bacteria that cause foodborne illness compared to pasteurized milk products. Infants and children are more likely to suffer from permanent damage due to diseases spread by raw milk because their immune systems are not fully developed.



## Is raw milk safe for babies?

Giving raw animal milk to babies is risky because milk bought on the farm or in a store is pooled from multiple animals that can carry germs. You cannot see or smell germs in raw milk. The risk of accidentally using contaminated raw milk is simply too high to recommend it for babies.



## What illnesses can occur if raw milk is contaminated with a pathogen?

Foodborne infections are much more serious than a "tummy ache," and can cause life-long health problems. E. coli O157:H7 can lead to hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS), which can result in acute kidney failure, seizures and strokes. Campylobacter can lead to Guillain Barre syndrome (GBS), which damages the nervous system and sometimes causes paralysis. Salmonella can lead to Reactive Arthritis. Listeria can cause injury to unborn babies or miscarriage in pregnant women. All of these infections can result in death, especially in children, older persons and persons with other illnesses or immune system problems.



## How does raw milk become contaminated?

Pathogens live in the intestines of animals and are released when an animal defecates. Contamination occurs when fecal matter gets into raw milk or the pipelines and other equipment used in production. Licensing, government inspections and testing of raw milk help monitor sanitation, but are not a guarantee of safety. Many states where raw milk is legal require a warning label informing consumers that there is an increased risk of pathogens in raw milk.



## Alternatives to raw milk:

There is a movement in the U.S. to consume organic, locally grown, unprocessed, more nutrient-dense foods. Some believe raw milk is more nutritious and provides the body "good bacteria." There are many other foods that contain "good bacteria" and are less risky than raw milk. Many stores carry pasteurized yogurt and kefir with probiotics that are very safe to feed children. There are also high quality nutritional supplements that can be used to add probiotic bacteria into one's diet.

For more information visit [www.realrawmilkfacts.com](http://www.realrawmilkfacts.com).

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This brochure is part of our on-going effort to end the need for Raw Milk litigation in this country.

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