



## RAW MILK AND RAW MILK PRODUCTS

Raw milk is milk that has not been pasteurized to kill harmful bacteria. Raw milk—and products made from it such as queso fresco—can carry harmful germs, such as listeria, salmonella, campylobacter, E. coli, viruses and parasites. These germs can present serious health risks to you and your family.

### WHAT IS PASTEURIZATION?

Pasteurization is the process of heating milk to a high enough temperature for enough time to kill harmful germs and make milk safe to drink. This process does not eliminate milk's nutritional value.

### WHAT ARE THE RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH DRINKING RAW MILK AND EATING UNPASTEURIZED CHEESE AND OTHER MILK PRODUCTS?

Raw milk, even from healthy cows, can be contaminated with harmful germs that can make you very sick. In fact, raw milk is one of the riskiest foods to consume.

People who get sick from raw milk might have many days of diarrhea, stomach cramping, and vomiting. Some people might develop severe or even life-threatening diseases, including:

- Pregnancy loss
- Blood infection
- Hemolytic uremic syndrome, which can result in kidney failure, stroke, and even death
- Guillain-Barré syndrome, which can cause paralysis and even death.

### WHAT ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF PRODUCTS MADE WITH RAW OR UNPASTEURIZED MILK?

- Fresh Kefir
- Soft cheese or *queso fresco*
- Homemade cream cheese
- Homemade yogurt or ice cream

### WHO IS AT GREATEST RISK OF GETTING SICK FROM DRINKING RAW MILK?

Anyone can become sick from drinking raw milk or consuming raw milk products. The people at the highest risk for severe illness include:

- People who are pregnant
- Adults 65 years and older
- Children younger than 5 years
- People with weakened immune systems

People in these groups should not consume raw milk or products made with it.



## Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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## AM I AT RISK OF BEING INFECTED WITH AVIAN FLU IF I CONSUME MILK OR MILK PRODUCTS LIKE CHEESE?

The risk of contracting avian flu (H5N1) is very low to the general public and virtually eliminated if the milk is pasteurized.



Raw queso fresco

## HOW CAN I PROTECT MYSELF AND MY FAMILY?

**Consume pasteurized milk and dairy products.** Buy milk and dairy products that say “pasteurized” on the label. If in doubt, don’t buy it.

**Refrigerate milk, dairy products, and other perishable food at 40°F or colder.** Bacteria can multiply rapidly if left at room temperature or in the “danger zone” between 40°F and 140°F. Never leave perishable food out for more than two hours.

**Throw away expired food, including milk and dairy products.** When in doubt, throw it out.



Raw soft cheeses

## FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Raw Milk**

[www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/raw-milk-index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/raw-milk-index.html)

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - Fast Facts: Why Is Raw Milk Unsafe?**

[www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/fast-facts.html](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/fast-facts.html)

To find a nearby clinic or doctor, call the Public Health InfoLine at 833-540-0473. Open every day from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. [ph.lacounty.gov](http://ph.lacounty.gov)



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