

AAP News Parent Plus

INFORMATION FROM YOUR PEDIATRICIAN

Infants, children should stay away from raw milk

Infants, children and pregnant women should not drink raw milk or eat products made with raw milk because they can cause illness or death, according to a recent report from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Milk, cheese, yogurt and ice cream that are not pasteurized are considered raw milk products. Two people died and 195 went to the hospital after eating or drinking raw milk products between 1998 and 2009, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Infants and young children are especially at risk for getting sick after eating these products. Pregnant women also are at greater risk of problems such as miscarriage and infection.

People often consume raw milk products because they want unprocessed foods. But research studies have not shown any benefits to drinking raw milk, and products made with unpasteurized milk can be the source of various infections.

Pasteurization is the process of raising the temperature of milk to at least 161 degrees for more than 15-20 seconds, followed by rapid cooling. Pasteurization kills dangerous bacteria and reduces the risk of getting sick. The process first was used in the United States in the 1920s. Before pasteurization, raw milk contributed to a large amount of food-related illness.

Claims linking pasteurized milk to health problems have not been backed up by scientific data, according to the report. In addition, strong scientific evidence shows that pasteurized milk is just as nutritious as raw milk.

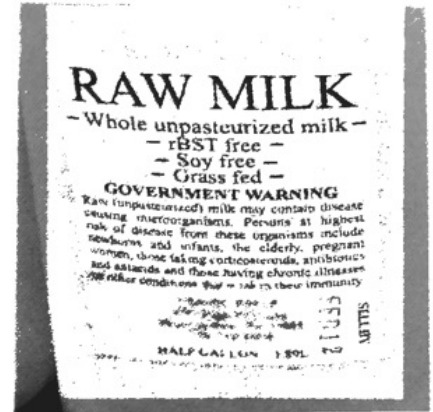
The sale of raw milk products is legal in 30 states, but shipments between states are not allowed. About 1% to 3% of all dairy products eaten in the United States are not pasteurized.

The Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention also recommend against consuming raw milk products.

For more information, visit www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/raw-milk-index.html or <http://www.fda.gov/food/foodborneillnesscontaminants/buystoreservesafefood/ucm277854.htm>.

— Patrick M. O'Connell

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