Raw Milk
Know the raw facts

Many people choose raw milk thinking it will improve their health, but it can cause serious illness in anyone. Outbreaks linked to raw milk have doubled in the past five years.

What is raw milk anyway?

- Raw milk has not been pasteurized to kill harmful, disease-causing germs, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites.
- Pasteurization is the process of heating milk to 161 degrees Fahrenheit for 15 seconds to kill harmful bacteria.

Holy cow! Raw milk outbreaks are on the rise in the U.S.

- The risk of an outbreak caused by raw milk is at least 150 times higher than the risk of an outbreak caused by pasteurized milk.
- The average number of outbreaks linked to raw milk was 4 times higher between 2007-2012 compared to 1993-2006.
- In all, 81 outbreaks in 26 states were linked to raw milk from 2007-2012.

Top germs linked to raw milk outbreaks (from 2007-2012)

- Campylobacter, 62 outbreaks
- E. coli, 13 outbreaks
- Salmonella, 2 outbreaks

Some groups are more likely to get sick from raw milk

- Children 59% of outbreaks reported from 2007-2012 included at least one child under 5 years
- Older adults (65 or older)
- People with weakened immune systems (including people with HIV/AIDS and chronic diseases such as diabetes and cancer)

Raw milk is becoming more available

- In 2004, selling raw milk was legal in 22 states. By 2011, this increased to 30 states.
- Most outbreaks (81%) happened in states where selling raw milk was legal.

What can you do to lower your risk of getting sick?

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

Be wise. Only drink milk that’s pasteurized!

For more information on raw milk, please visit www.cdc.gov/foodafety/rawmilk