



Diseases Fact Sheet - Food Safety and Raw Milk

South Dakota Department of Health

Office of Disease Prevention Services - 605-773-3737 -(1-800-592-1861 in South Dakota only)

This material is provided for informational purposes only and is not a substitute for medical care. We are not able to answer personal medical questions. Please see your health care provider concerning appropriate care, treatment or other medical advice.

What is it?

The consumption of raw milk and products made with raw milk poses a significant risk of food-borne illnesses such as [campylobacteriosis](#), E. coli, salmonellosis, listeriosis and brucellosis. Adherence to good hygiene practices during milking may reduce the risk of such contamination but does not eliminate that risk. Pasteurization is the only way to ensure that fluid milk products do not contain harmful bacteria. Pasteurization has been widely used for more than 100 years and has significantly improved public health and safety, preventing contagious diseases from salmonellosis to typhoid fever. Individuals at highest risk for illness from contaminated milk include young children, pregnant women and those with weakened immune systems.

[Campylobacteriosis](#) is one bacterial infection associated with the consumption of raw milk. It affects the intestinal tract and, rarely, the blood. The bacteria spreads by consuming contaminated foods or liquids such as milk or water. Campylobacteriosis may cause mild or severe diarrhea, often with fever and traces of blood in the stool. It can also cause abdominal pain, vomiting, fever, nausea, and malaise. Symptoms generally appear 2 to 5 days, occasionally up to 10 days, after eating or drinking the contaminated food or drink.

Related Sites:

- South Dakota Department of Health
 - [Campylobacteriosis fact sheet](#)
 - [Food history questionnaire for investigating disease reports](#)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
 - [Food Safety and Raw Milk](#)
 - [Real Stories of the Dangers of Raw Milk](#)
- FDA
 - [The Dangers of Raw Milk: Unpasteurized Milk Can Pose a Serious Health Risk](#)