

# Raw Milk is Dangerous

The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care answers questions about raw milk.

**Some people believe that drinking unpasteurized milk is healthy and good for you. Is this true?**

No. Drinking unpasteurized milk can result in mild illnesses, long-lasting serious diseases or even death. Disease-causing bacteria found in unpasteurized milk include E. coli 0157, salmonella and campylobacter. E. coli 0157 is the same bacteria that caused the outbreak in Walkerton in 2000, killing 7 people.



**What are the symptoms of infection?**

These bacteria can cause severe diarrhea (which may be bloody), stomach cramps or abdominal pain, vomiting, fever, weakness and chills.

**Are some people more at risk than other?**

Yes. Certain groups such as young children, the elderly, people who are ill, pregnant women and those with weak immune systems are at increased risk of serious illness.

**Can the bacteria from drinking unpasteurized milk be passed onto others?**

Yes. If someone becomes sick from drinking raw milk, this infection can be passed from person-to-person by hand-to-mouth contact. This fecal-oral spread from person-to-person happens especially when someone has diarrhea and is not washing their hands properly or maintaining good hygiene. Disease can also be spread by those who are caring for a person who is ill.

**How does pasteurization make milk safe to drink?**

Pasteurization is a heating process. The minimal pasteurization requirement in Ontario is to heat the milk to 72 degrees Celsius for 16 seconds at a dairy processing plant. This process destroys disease-producing bacteria. Milk sold in stores is pasteurized.

**What should I do if I find unpasteurized milk?**

It is illegal to sell, offer to sell, deliver or distribute unpasteurized milk. Unpasteurized milk should be reported to the Ministry of Agriculture and Food's complaint line at 1-888-466-2372 x. 64391.

**Good Idea!**

**Do you want to ensure your families and communities stay safe? Join the campaign supporting the pasteurization of milk.**

- 1) Host a ROSE Session in your community on the "Current Dangers of Drinking Raw Milk". Invite the local health unit to present on the importance of this issue. Be sure to invite local media to attend.
- 2) Have the Members of your WI write a letter to your local MP and MPP.
- 3) If you know of someone selling, distributing or offering to sell raw milk, report them to the number listed above.
- 4) If you know anyone who drinks raw milk, please share with them the concerns and risks associated with it.

**HOT NEWS**

Before the holidays, a Durham area farm was raided and equipment confiscated when it was determined raw milk was being produced and distributed from the facility. The raid prompted Conservative MPP Bill Murdoch (Grey-Bruce) to introduce a discussion and vote on the issue of raw milk into the provincial legislature. The bill was soundly defeated.

WI Members right across the province "stepped up" and voiced their concerns on this issue. Provincially, WI supported the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and provided Members who could respond to media questions. Many Branches took advantage of the current issue and became engaged in local events and discussions.

What a great way to promote WI and the work we have been doing for the past 110 years!