

The Current Dangers of Drinking Unpasteurized Milk

Adelaide Hunter Hoodless fought long and hard to get milk pasteurized in Ontario after the tragic death of her infant son. Her crusade to better educate women and girls in rural Ontario was the foundation on which Women's Institute was built. Since 1938, the Ontario Health Act has required pasteurization of all milk and cream for human consumption. So, why in 2005 are people still getting sick from consuming raw (unpasteurized) milk?

Health Canada has reported many cases of E. coli, Campylobacter, Brucella, Listeria and Salmonella as a result of drinking contaminated milk right across the country in recent years. As of April 2005, there had been four new reports in Ontario of illnesses related to E. coli O157:H7 that may have been linked to

the consumption of raw milk. And those are just the cases we know about. People often relate their symptoms to having an upset digestive system rather than being caused by consuming contaminated milk.

This past summer Dr. Murray McQuigge (co-chair of an Ontario Working Group on the topic) reminded the Kemble WI about the dangers of drinking unpasteurized milk. He indicated that pasteurization has very little effect on the nutritional value of milk and that blindfolded tests have shown that it is not possible to tell the difference between the taste of pasteurized or unpasteurized milk.

According to the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, pasteurized milk is an excellent source of calcium, protein, riboflavin, vitamins A and D, phosphorus, and

a good source of thiamin and B12. Studies have shown that calcium absorption remains unaltered through pasteurization. Vitamins A and D, as well as riboflavin and niacin are generally not affected by heat treatment. Although there is a minor loss of thiamin, B12 and vitamin C, they are so small in comparison to the large amount of the two B vitamins present it is insignificant. As milk is not an important dietary source of vitamin C, this loss is not nutritionally remarkable.

FWIO is happy to join the campaign to re-educate Ontarians about the current dangers of consuming unpasteurized milk. We have started a letter writing campaign to Ontario's Health Units, the Dairy Farmers of Ontario and Dr. McQuigge's working group about our support for this important campaign.

Good Idea!

Invite your local Health Unit and/or Dairy Farmer to make a presentation to your community that will help increase awareness and prevent unnecessary illness for your community.

Resources:

Canadian Partnership for Consumer Food

Safety Education - www.canfightbac.org

Health Canada - www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Dairy Farmers of Ontario - www.milk.org

The Food Safety Network - www.foodsafetynetwork.ca

Did you know?

Pasteurization means that raw milk has been subjected to heat to eliminate disease-causing bacteria that may be present. Raw milk is milk that has not been treated to make it safe and is obtained directly from a lactating animal, usually a cow, and has been cooled at the farm to refrigeration temperatures.

Save the Dates!

The FWIO Provincial Conference 2006 is August 11-12 at Fanshawe College in London.

The theme this year is "TEAM-Together Everyone Achieves More". Conference registration packages including competition entry forms will be sent out to all Branches in January.

Competition entry forms must be sent in by May 15th and competition articles by June 15th to Ruth Axford, Mossley, Ontario, N0L 1V0. For more information, please contact the conference Co-Chairs Eleanor Williams at 519-229-8200 or Donna Willows at 519-393-6455.

- The FWIC Convention will be held at the Capri Centre in Red Deer, Alberta from June 14-17, 2006.
- The ACWW Canada Area Conference will be held October 13-15, 2006 in Regina, Saskatchewan.
- The ACWW 25th Triennial Conference will be held June 2-10, 2007 in Turku, Finland.