



Raw Milk

OVERVIEW

Since the 1920s, milk sold in the US has been routinely pasteurized to kill harmful bacteria that poses a special threat to children and pregnant women. Proponents of raw milk claim that the pasteurization of milk destroys or neutralizes important nutrients in milk and claim health benefits of milk are inactivated by pasteurization. These claims have not been demonstrated in evidence-based studies and do not outweigh the risks of raw milk consumption.

The sale of raw milk across states is prohibited by the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA). However, a state can decide whether to allow the sale of raw milk within its borders by retailers or on farms. A growing movement has led to an influx of state bills that would loosen existing regulation and allow raw milk sale by retailers, on licensed or unlicensed farms, or through cow or herd share programs that allow consumers to pay a farmer to board and care for animals to produce raw milk for those consumers.

AAP POSITION

- Raw milk and milk products continue to be sources of bacterial infections attributable to a number of virulent pathogens, including *Listeria monocytogens*, *Campylobacter jejuni*, *Salmonella* species, *Brucella* species, and *Escherichia coli* O157.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) endorses a ban on the sale of raw or unpasteurized milk in the US, including the sale of certain raw milk cheeses, such as fresh cheeses, soft cheeses, and soft-ripened cheeses.
- The AAP supports state bans on the sale of raw milk and milk products, including sales via farms and through cow or herd share programs.

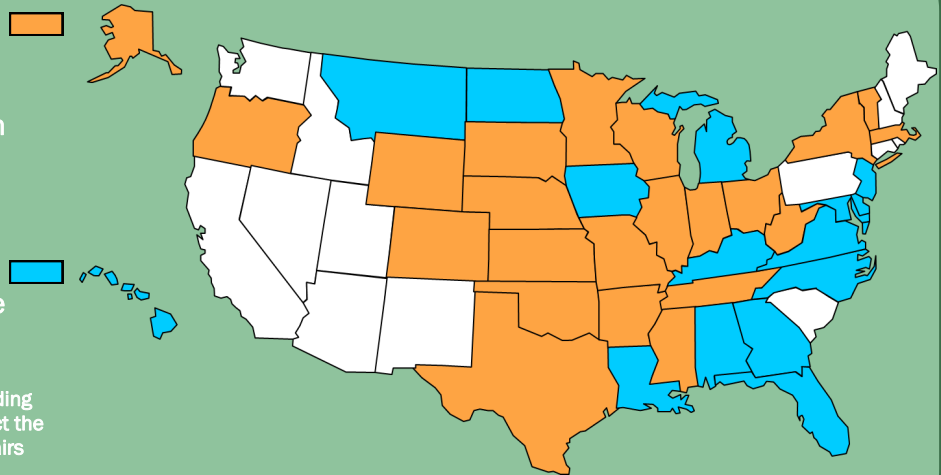
FACTS

- Almost 1,000 people in the US became sick from drinking raw milk or eating cheese made from raw milk between 2007 and 2012 according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
- Unpasteurized milk is 150 times more likely to cause foodborne illness and results in 13 times more hospitalizations than illnesses involving pasteurized dairy products.
- States that restrict the sale of nonpasteurized products have fewer foodborne illness outbreaks and illnesses. The number of US outbreaks caused by nonpasteurized milk increased from 30 between 2007 and 2009 to 51 between 2010 and 2012. Most outbreaks were caused by nonpasteurized milk purchased from states in which nonpasteurized milk sale was legal.
- Virtually all national and international advisory and regulatory committees related to food safety have strongly endorsed the principles of only consuming pasteurized milk products.
- No evidence-based studies have shown that drinking raw milk provides any greater health benefits to consumers than drinking pasteurized milk.

PROGRESS

- 22 states— laws allowing the sale of raw cow or goat milk on farms or through cow share or herd share programs
- 15 states— laws prohibiting the sale of all raw milk products

For information on current law or pending legislation in your state, please contact the AAP Division of State Government Affairs at stgov@aap.org



MORE

- [AAP Policy—Consumption of Raw or Unpasteurized Milk and Milk Products by Pregnant Women and Children](http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/133/1/175.full)—<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/133/1/175.full>
- [US Food and Drug Administration \(FDA\)—The Dangers of Raw Milk: Unpasteurized Milk Can Pose a Serious Health Risk](http://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/consumers/ucm079516.htm)—www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/consumers/ucm079516.htm
- [The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)—Food Safety and Raw Milk](http://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/raw-milk-index.html)—www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/raw-milk-index.html
- [National Conference of State Legislatures \(NCSL\)—State Milk Laws](http://www.ncsl.org/research/agriculture-and-rural-development/raw-milk-2012.aspx)—www.ncsl.org/research/agriculture-and-rural-development/raw-milk-2012.aspx