

## Milk Facts

### What is raw milk?

Raw milk has not been pasteurized. Raw milk is not the same as organic milk.

*For more information, go to:*

**[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)**

### Is raw milk safe to drink?

No. According to the Food and Drug Administration, raw milk can harbor dangerous microorganisms that can pose serious health risks to those who drink it.

*For more information:* Visit **[Food and Drug Administration Website](http://www.fda.gov)**

### Why is milk pasteurized?

Pasteurization kills harmful bacteria, such as *E. coli* O157:H7, *Listeria* and *Salmonella*, that can be found in raw milk (milk that has not been pasteurized). All milk intended for direct consumption should be pasteurized – it's a matter of food safety. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend drinking only pasteurized milk. Before the invention and acceptance of pasteurization, raw milk was a common source of bacteria that caused serious illnesses such as tuberculosis, diphtheria, and typhoid fever. In the 1900s, many mothers recognized this risk and would boil milk before giving it to their infants and young children.

*For more information, go to:*

**[dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org)**

**[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)**

**[Food and Drug Administration](http://www.fda.gov)**

**[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov)**

### How is milk pasteurized?

Pasteurization is a simple, proven and effective process, approved by the Food and Drug Administration, that kills potentially harmful bacteria without affecting the taste or nutritional value of milk. During pasteurization, the temperature of milk is raised to at least 161° Fahrenheit for 16 seconds and then rapidly cooled.

Pasteurization extends milk's shelf life and destroys harmful bacteria. Ultra-high temperature pasteurization, where milk is heated to 280° Fahrenheit for more than 2 seconds, is used to extend shelf life in some dairy foods.

*For more information, go to:*

**[dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org)**

**[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)**

**[Food and Drug Administration](http://www.fda.gov)**

Does pasteurization affect milk quality?

No scientific evidence shows any meaningful difference between the nutritional values of pasteurized and unpasteurized (raw) milk. In addition, vitamin D, which is not found in significant amounts in raw milk, is added to pasteurized milk, making it an even more nutritious product. It is important to understand that pasteurizing milk **does not** cause lactose intolerance or allergic reactions. Both raw milk and pasteurized milk can cause allergic reactions in people sensitive to milk proteins.

*For more information, go to:*

[dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org)

[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)

[Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](http://www.cdc.gov)

Is raw milk better for those with lactose intolerance?

No. The enzyme required to break down lactose, known as lactase, is produced in the human body and is not present in either raw or pasteurized milk. People with lactose intolerance lack this enzyme. Whether milk is raw or pasteurized is irrelevant to lactose digestibility.

*For more information, go to:*

*midwestdairy.com* for information on [raw milk](#) and [lactose intolerance](#)

Are there antibiotics in milk that reaches the food supply?

All milk – both regular and organic – is [tested](#) for [antibiotics](#). During 2010, nearly four million tests (3,892,196) were conducted on milk samples to detect antibiotic or other drug residues with less than 0.03% positive (1,245), and, in accordance with government regulations, any milk testing positive for antibiotics cannot be sold to the public.

*For more information, go to:*

[dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org)

[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)

Do antibiotics used on farms result in antibiotic resistance in humans?

Research shows that the overall health consequences of antimicrobial resistance of dairy pathogens affecting humans appears to be small, and is likely not a human health concern, as long as the milk is pasteurized. No matter the type of dairy farm, antibiotics are only given when they are necessary to treat and cure an animal's illness. They are only given for a prescribed time to treat the specific illness. The milk from cows undergoing treatment never reaches the food supply.

*For more information, go to* [Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)

Are there pesticides in milk?

No. Stringent government standards ensure that all milk is safe, wholesome and nutritious. [Recent government testing](#) found that all of the milk samples tested were free from pesticide residue.

For more information, go to:

[dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org)

[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)

What is bST or BGH (bovine somatotropin or bovine growth hormone)?

Cows naturally produce bovine somatotropin (bST) in their pituitary gland; it directs how energy and nutrients are used for growth in young cattle and for milk production in lactating cows. Dairy farmers may choose to use rbST to help cows produce more milk. In either situation – whether bovine somatotropin (bST) produced by the cow or by recombinant DNA technology (rbST) – no differences can be detected in the animal or the milk produced by that animal.

For more information, go to:

[dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org) for information about [bovine somatotropin](#) and [dairy cow lactation](#)

[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)

Are hormones added to milk?

No. Hormones are naturally present in foods of plant and animal origin, including milk. Some farmers choose to supplement some of their cows with recombinant bovine somatotropin (rbST) to increase milk production, but science shows that there is no effect on levels in the milk itself.

For more information, go to:

[dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org)

[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)

Is rbST safe for my family?

Since rbST was approved for use by the [Food and Drug Administration](#) (FDA) in the early 1990s, its safety has been reaffirmed by the [scientific community](#). Scientists tell us that rbST is species-specific, meaning that it is biologically inactive in humans. Also, pasteurization destroys 90 percent of bST and rbST in milk. Any trace amounts of bovine somatotropin that remain after pasteurization of milk are broken down in the human gut into inactive protein fragments, like any other dietary protein. Numerous [scientific studies](#) have shown there is no significant difference between milk from rbST-supplemented and non-rbST-supplemented cows. For this reason, the FDA has established that dairy products from cows treated with rbST do not need to be labeled.

For more information, go to:

[dairyfarmingtoday.org](http://dairyfarmingtoday.org) for information about [pasteurization](#) and [bovine somatotropin](#)

[Get the Facts on midwestdairy.com](http://midwestdairy.com)

What are some of the critical steps dairy farmers follow to improve milk quality?

There are many steps dairy farmers follow to produce high-quality, wholesome and safe milk. These critical steps start with the cow and end at your table. The steps include:

- Healthy cows
- Strict, on-farm milking procedures
- Quick cooling of milk and immediate transportation to the manufacturer
- Testing for antibiotics
- Pasteurization

