

Excerpts from
“Unpasteurized Milk: The Hazards of a Health Fetish”
Journal of the American Medical Association (Vol. 252, No. 15, Oct. 19, 1984) by Morris E. Potter, D.V.M., Arnold F. Kaufmann, D.V.M., Paul A. Blake, M.D., Roger A. Feldman, M.D.

- “Abundant evidence has shown that raw milk serves as the source of bacteria that causes outbreaks of disease in humans: in recent years, most frequently salmonellosis and campylobacteriosis. In the investigations of such outbreaks, the epidemiologic evidence, combined with knowledge about the occurrence of specific pathogens in cattle and the isolation of some of these pathogens from raw milk, leaves no doubt that raw milk is a vehicle for disease in humans.”
- “...programs relying solely on sanitary and health standards have not succeeded in eliminating contamination caused by symptomatic or asymptomatic infection in the milk-producing animal. Contamination from animals with organisms such as Salmonella and Campylobacter has thus become the primary hazard for raw milk consumers.”
- “In food hygiene, as in the operating room, clean is not synonymous with safe.”
- “Milk is an excellent vehicle of infection because its fat content protects pathogens from gastric acid, and, being fluid, it has a relatively short gastric transit time.
- “The promotion of raw milk as providing major health benefits beyond those of pasteurized milk has not been supported by the evidence. In contrast, the hazards of raw milk have been proved.”
- “Many outbreaks of salmonellosis due to consumption of raw or improperly pasteurized milk, nonfat dry milk, and cheese have been described.”
- “Numerous studies in multiple locations have confirmed the role of raw milk in the transmission of Salmonella Dublin to humans”
- “Based on their 1982 data, California health authorities calculated that the risk of S. Dublin infection was 84 times higher in person who consumed raw milk than in persons who did not.”
- “In a detailed one-year study of sporadic campylobacteriosis conducted in Iowa in 1982 and 1983, 35% of the ill persons had drunk raw milk during the week before onset of illness; drinking raw milk was the only significant difference between cases and controls.”
- “Other bacterial diseases associated with drinking unpasteurized milk from cows include brucellosis, colibacillosis, listeriosis, tuberculosis, campylobacteriosis, staphylococcosis, streptococcosis, streptobacillosis, and yersiniosis.”
- “The relative merits of raw and pasteurized milk have been debated for at least 90 years. In this period, the theoretic health benefits of raw milk have never withstood careful scientific scrutiny.”
- Conversely, the fact that raw milk presents a substantially greater inherent risk of infectious disease has been demonstrated repeatedly. Surprisingly, the controversy continues.”
- Regulation of the sale of raw milk often involves discussion of freedom of choice. A major feature of the individual’s right to free choice, however, is informed consent, and incorrect information on the purported benefits of drinking raw milk is so widespread that truly informed consent is difficult to achieve.”
- “Also, in matters of foodstuffs, parents make choices for their children. Therefore, the children of advocates of raw milk are exposed to the risks of infectious diseases without a full understanding of the danger. Children also tend to drink what is given to them in school without questioning its safety. There have been numerous outbreaks of enteric diseases in schoolchildren given raw milk while on field trips to dairies in the United States....”

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