

How Raw Milk Can Be Dangerous & Where It Is Legal

Many in the natural health community point to the laws against raw milk as an example of how our healthier choices are being stripped away from us. For most of us, it's no secret that pasteurizing and homogenization of milk turns it into a product that feeds parasites, causes allergies, and should be avoided. But within our natural health community there is considerable debate about whether or not raw milk is good for you. Some say it is a powerful super-food that can cure what ails you. Others say that we were not meant to ingest milk products as adults, and any and all animal milks are bad for you. Another common and very logical argument is that humans should drink human milk and cows, with their multiple stomachs and radically different digestive systems, should drink cow milk. End of story. It certainly makes sense that cow's milk is formulated for cows and this is why cow's milk is bad for humans. But raw milk advocates say that when milk is pasteurized and/or homogenized, the enzymes needed for humans to digest cow's milk are destroyed. They argue that raw milk is easy to digest and very beneficial.

Podcast: Green Divas Interviews Michael Edwards about Raw Milk

Is Raw Milk Dangerous?

It certainly can be! When you are drinking cows milk from a conventional dairy farmer, you are drinking milk that was often contaminated with e-coli, salmonella, and a host of other pathogens. Not to mention puss, antibiotics, growth hormones, and many other ingredients you don't want any part

of. This is milk from cows that are stuck in a small pen virtually their whole lives, fed acidifying grains, injected with a wide array of drugs, and continually impregnated, while having it's calf taken away at every birth. Factory farming practices are the source of e-coli and salmonella outbreaks, and these mutated superbugs do not exist naturally in nature. Raw milk from a conventional farmer is not fit for human consumption, and is in fact very dangerous. It should be illegal. But, for that matter, many of the conventional farming practices we use should be illegal.

It's a whole other story when you drink raw milk from a healthy cow. If the cow was grass fed, and is healthy, the milk is healthy. If you have not developed an allergy to milk (due to consuming conventional milk), raw, whole milk from a small farm that does things the right way can have amazing health benefits. And yes, we mean whole milk, not skimmed. The fat has nutrients needed to help digest the milk, and the fat is very beneficial to us. But it's not easy to find raw milk. Even if you can find it, you may not be able to just walk up and buy it. Many people get their raw milk legally by purchasing a share of a cow, and therefore take their share of the milk produced. In some states there is a loophole allowing people to purchase raw milk for animal consumption only. Below is a chart showing raw milk laws as of May 2014, information courtesy of Farm to Consumer Legal Defense Fund.

Where and How Can You Buy Raw Milk?

<p style="text-align: center;">Raw Milk Retail Sales Legal</p> <p>States that allow sales in retail stores but require a permit allowing sales on/off farm and at farmer's markets.</p>	<p>Arizona, Idaho, New Mexico, South Carolina, California, Maine, Oregon*, Washington, Connecticut, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania</p>	<p>* Goat & sheep milk only</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Raw Milk On-farm Sales Legal with License</p>	<p>Massachusetts, South Dakota, Wisconsin, Missouri, Texas, New York, Utah</p>	<p>* Sales are legal at retail store if producer owns and operates store** Sales are legal at retail store if producer has majority ownership in store</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Raw Milk On-farm Sales Without License Legal</p>	<p>Arizona³, Minnesota, Nebraska, Oregon¹, Illinois, Mississippi^{1,2}, New Hampshire^{3,4,6}, Vermont^{3,4}, Kansas, Missouri⁴, Oklahoma^{3*}</p>	<p>* Limit on volume of goat milk sales</p>
<p style="text-align: center;">Raw Milk Via Herdshares (Otherwise Known As Cowshares)</p> <p>Legal by statute^a, regulation^b, court decision^c, or written policy^d</p>	<p>Alaska^b, Michigan^d, Tennessee,^{a,8} Colorado^{a*}, North Dakota^a, Wyoming^{b*}, Idaho^{a*}, Ohio^c</p>	<p>* Farms operating share program need to be registered with the state</p>

<p style="text-align: center;">Raw Milk Sales for Human Consumption Illegal</p>	<p>Alabama^{7,8}, Indiana^{7,8}, Montana, Virginia⁷, Deleware, Iowa, Nevada[*]</p> <p><small>West Virgini, Florida⁹, Kentucky^{2,5,7}, New Jersey, Georgia⁸, Louisiana, North Carolina⁸, Hawaii, Maryland, Rhode Island⁵</small></p>	<p>1 – Limit number of lactating animals 2 – Only sales for goat milk are legal 3 – Limits sales by volume 4 – Delivery is legal 5 – By prescription only 6 – Sale at farmer’s markets legal 7 – No law on herd shares either for or against 8 – Sale of raw milk for pets legal</p>
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For more information on raw milk sales, check out State-by-State Review of Raw Milk Laws. Please verify your own state’s laws before purchasing raw milk. This information is not legal advice. If you choose to consume raw milk, we ask that you do your best to ensure a higher level of humane treatment is given to the animals. For conventional farms, and many organic farms, a dairy cow’s life is an incredibly sad existence. The practice involves continually impregnating the cow, taking away her children, and taking all of her milk for sale. This is simply inhumane. My conscience would feel better about eating a steak than drinking a glass of milk from this kind of farm. When shopping for raw milk, whether it be from cows, goats, or sheep, pay a higher price for the healthiest and most humane product you can find. And regardless of how powerful you think the health benefits of milk are, don’t forget, nothing beats a diet with a foundation of raw fresh produce.