Consumer Reports Finds Hamburger from Grass-Fed and Organic Cattle Poses Fewer Health Risks

Consumer Reports tested 300 samples (458 pounds) of hamburger from 103 stores from 26 cities for bacterial contamination, comparing "sustainable" meat to conventional meat. (Sustainable, in this study, referred to beef from cattle that was not given antibiotics). What they found was both enlightening and truly disturbing.

Beef samples were tested for 5 types of bacteria:

- Salmonella
- Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA)
- Coli (7 strains)
- Clostridium perfringens (CDC estimates 1 million cases of food poisoning due to this bacteria each year.)
- Enterococcus

Consumer Reports published the following results:

All 458 pounds of beef we examined contained bacteria that signified fecal contamination (enterococcus and/or nontoxin-producing E. coli), which can cause blood or urinary tract infections. Almost 20 percent contained C. perfringens, a bacteria that causes almost 1 million cases of food poisoning annually. Ten percent of the samples had a strain of S. aureus bacteria that can produce a toxin that can make you sick. That toxin can't be destroyed—even with proper cooking.

Just 1 percent of our samples contained salmonella. … salmonella causes an estimated 1.2 million illnesses and 450 deaths in the U.S. each year.

Consumer Reports then tested the bacteria they found and discovered that 18 percent of conventional beef samples were contaminated with superbugs—dangerous bacteria that are resistant to three or more classes of antibiotics. While testing out to contain half that amount, 9%, sustainably produced beef also contained superbugs.

A full 97% of the beef sold is obtained from conventionally raised cattle that are crowded into feedlots and left to stand in their own manure. They are fed corn and soy (both of which are usually GMO), candy, slaughtered parts of pigs and chickens and dried chicken manure and litter rather than the grasses and other plants they were meant to eat. They are also fed plastic pellets for roughage and routine antibiotics.

Although sustainable beef is clearly better and cleaner, all of the samples, even organic beef samples, were contaminated. Consumer Reports strongly recommends cooking hamburger to an internal temperature of 160 degrees – medium, rather than rare or medium rare. Rare hamburger, it seems, is much more likely to cause disease than other cuts of beef due to the fact that it is ground up and the bacteria is inside as well as outside. With other cuts of beef, the bacteria would only be found on the surface, where it is more likely to be killed by the heat source. If you've been eating conventionally grown meat, consider a GMO detox.

Further Reading:

- *The Way We Used To Eat – The Real Paleo Diet*
- *Food For Naught: 5 Reasons To Kick Factory Farmed Meats Off Your Plate*
- *Candida, Gut Flora, Allergies, and Disease*
- *Detox Cheap and Easy Without Fasting – Recipes Included*
- *Holistic Guide to Healing the Endocrine System and Balancing Our Hormones*

Sources:

- *How Safe Is Your Ground Beef?* – Consumer Reports