



STATE OF MICHIGAN

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
LANSING

GRETCHEN WHITMER
GOVERNOR

ELIZABETH HERTEL
DIRECTOR

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CONTACT: Chelsea Wuth
517-241-2112

WuthC@michigan.gov

MDHHS, MDARD remind Michiganders about risks of consuming raw (unpasteurized) milk and milk products

LANSING, Mich. – The Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) and Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) are reminding residents of the risks associated with consuming raw (unpasteurized) milk amid the current Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) outbreak affecting dairy cow herds. This virus has the potential to spread to humans, with one case reported this year in Texas.

“Anyone can get sick from drinking raw milk, but children under age 5, adults over age 65 and those with weakened immune systems are more at risk for getting sick,” said Dr. Natasha Bagdasarian, chief medical executive. “Now that HPAI is infecting both cows and birds, it’s important to make sure that you are consuming food that is safe, including ensuring that the milk products you eat or drink are pasteurized.”

Pasteurized milk is extremely safe and has undergone a heating process which kills disease-causing germs like *Campylobacter*, *E. coli* and *Salmonella*. People who consume raw (or unpasteurized) milk, cheeses and other dairy products like ice cream created from raw milk are at risk for a variety of illnesses. Only pasteurized milk is sold in stores and provided to children in school lunches.

People can get ill from the same source and product of raw milk they drank previously – milk that someone consumes from the same farm over a duration of time may not always be safe. Raw milk can get contaminated in many ways. While good safety practices can reduce the chance of germs getting in raw milk, they cannot eliminate risk.

The Food and Drug Administration does not currently have concerns about the safety or availability of pasteurized milk products nationwide. Pasteurization has continually proven to inactivate bacteria and viruses, like influenza viruses, in milk and is required for any milk entering interstate commerce.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention [recommends taking the following steps](#) to reduce risk:

- Choose pasteurized milk and dairy products.
- Refrigerate milk, dairy products and other perishable food at 40°F or colder.

- Throw away expired food, including milk and dairy products.

For more information, visit [CDC.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk](https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk).

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