



News Release

CALIFORNIA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 24, 2015
PH15-025

CONTACT: Anita Gore
(916) 440-7259

CDPH Issues Warning About the Dangers of Consuming Raw Milk

This revised version corrects the CDFA news release and Web link.

SACRAMENTO -- California Department of Public Health (CDPH) Director and State Health Officer Dr. Karen Smith today warned consumers that the consumption of unpasteurized (raw) dairy products may cause serious illness. Six Northern California residents have recently been diagnosed with campylobacteriosis, a bacterial infection that can come from consuming contaminated raw milk.

A recent investigation conducted by CDPH identified multiple bottles of Claravale Farm raw milk that tested positive for *Campylobacter*. Under the direction of the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA), Claravale Farm has initiated a recall of the affected product. (See [CDFA Announces Recall of Raw Milk Products at Claravale Farm of San Benito County](#) news release.)

Campylobacteriosis may cause diarrhea, abdominal pain, fever, nausea, and vomiting within two to five days after exposure to the organism. Illness can last for up to a week or more and can be especially severe for those who have weakened or compromised immune systems, and for young children and the elderly. Although most people who get campylobacteriosis recover completely, some patients do suffer long-term effects, including arthritis and paralysis.

Raw milk is milk from cows, goats, sheep, or other animals that has not been pasteurized (heat treated) to kill harmful germs. A wide variety of germs that can make people sick have been found in raw milk, such as *Brucella*, *Campylobacter*, *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium bovis*, *Salmonella*, and Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*, including *E. coli* O157. *E. coli* O157 can cause hemolytic uremic syndrome, which is a sometimes deadly cause of anemia and potentially permanent kidney failure. Raw milk contaminated with disease-causing bacteria does not smell or look any different from uncontaminated raw milk, and there is no easy way for the consumer to know whether the raw milk is contaminated.

Over the past decade, CDPH, other states, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have investigated numerous outbreaks of foodborne illness associated with consumption of raw milk and raw milk products. These have included outbreaks of illnesses due to *Campylobacter*, *E. coli* O157:H7, and *Salmonella*. Many involved young children. Illnesses associated with raw milk continue to occur.

Although the sale of raw milk from some dairies is legal in California, CDPH does not recommend drinking raw milk or raw milk products or giving raw milk, colostrum, raw cream or other raw milk products to children. Raw milk products sold in California are required to carry a warning label:

"WARNING: Raw (unpasteurized) milk and raw milk dairy products may contain disease-causing microorganisms. Persons at highest risk of disease from these organisms include newborns and infants; the elderly; pregnant women; those taking corticosteroids, antibiotics or antacids; and those having chronic illnesses or other conditions that weaken their immunity."

Consumers experiencing any ill effects after consuming raw dairy products should consult their health care provider.

For additional information, see CDPH's [Raw Milk and Raw Dairy Products](#) and CDC's [Food Safety and Raw Milk](#) webpages.

www.cdph.ca.gov

