



Florida Department of Health Provides Update on Raw Milk

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Tallahassee, Fla.— The Florida Department of Health is providing an update on raw milk availability in the Northeast and Central Florida regions.

What is Raw Milk

Raw milk is milk from cows, sheep, goats, or other animals that has not been pasteurized, a heat-treating process that destroys potentially harmful bacteria. Consumers have reported benefits of raw milk consumption, including better taste and protective effects for asthma and allergies.

In Florida, raw milk can only be sold for non-human consumption as pet or animal food, which limits regulation efforts of sanitary practices. Containers must have a label clearly stating that the raw milk is for animal consumption only.

Floridians should be aware of potential risks associated with consumption, which may vary depending on the source of milk. The producer's handling of raw milk and milking procedures are vital in prevention of contamination. Many people consume raw milk safely. However, raw milk can contain disease-causing bacteria, such as *Campylobacter*, *Escherichia coli* (*E. coli*), *Listeria*, *Salmonella*, and others. These bacteria can cause gastrointestinal illness, including diarrhea, vomiting, and stomach cramps.

Information on the Consumption of Raw Milk in the Northeast/Central Florida Region

Due to continued recent cases of *Campylobacter* and Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC) infections linked to a particular farm, the Florida Department of Health is providing information to assist Floridians in making informed decisions about their health. Sanitation practices in this farm are of particular concern due to the number of cases. There have been 21 cases, including six children under the age of 10, and seven

hospitalizations linked to consumption of raw milk from the same farm. Severe complications have been reported for at least two cases.

STEC bacteria in its most severe form can result in hemolytic uremic syndrome (HUS) which is characterized by hemolysis and kidney failure, which is of particular concern for children. Groups at higher risk for severe illness include infants and young children, pregnant women, elderly individuals, and those with weakened immune systems.

Floridians are encouraged to use this information to make informed decisions about their health and sources of raw milk should they choose to consume it.

About the Florida Department of Health

The Florida Department of Health, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.