

Poison Antidote



The Raw Truth about Raw Milk

Thinking of serving raw milk to your family? You may want to consider the risks before making that decision. Pasteurization is the process by which milk gets heated to a specific temperature for a certain period of time to kill bacteria such as Listeria, E. coli, and Salmonella. Raw milk is unpasteurized, so it may contain harmful bacteria that can cause foodborne illnesses.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) recommend that people should not consume raw milk or products made from raw milk, such as some cheeses, yogurts, cream, and butter. Certain populations are at higher risk of getting sick from bacterial infections from raw milk. These include young children, pregnant women, older adults, and those with weakened immune systems, such as those receiving chemotherapy or immune-suppressing drugs. Sometimes, even healthy people can get sick if milk contains harmful bacteria.

A common misconception is that if selling raw milk is legal in the state, then local farmers must have tested the milk, and it is free from bacteria. This is not always the case. The CDC reports that there have been more outbreaks in states where raw milk is legal than in states where it is illegal. While it is legal to sell raw milk at some farms and farmer-owned stores in Utah, there have been several outbreaks of illness in recent years following consumption. To prevent foodborne illness, avoid raw milk and products which are made from raw milk. And when purchasing milk or other dairy products at a farm or farmers' market, check the label to ensure it is pasteurized.

Sources: CDC, FDA, HHS



Traveling Season

From the food to new cultures to festivities, traveling can be exhilarating and rejuvenating! Often, when caught up in the exciting sights, sounds, and tastes, people may forget possible risks associated with traveling. For example, to save space and comply with Transportation Security Administration (TSA) regulations at airports, travelers often put medications and personal care products such as lotion, mouthwash, and hand sanitizer in smaller containers. The danger of removing products from their original containers is that they are not labeled properly, and they may be mistaken for candy or food by children and others. Also, storing medicines in purses, bags, or suitcases can provide easy access for children.

An important aspect of traveling is eating and drinking, and when travelers forget to be cautious, they put themselves at risk for food poisoning. Consuming unsafe water can be a source of illness while traveling. Be smart in what you consume, since nobody wants to spend their long-awaited vacation sick in bed.

Camping and backpacking are a popular traveling trend, but be aware that exploring new environments can result in bites, stings, and plant poisonings if precautions are not taken. While camping, people sometimes forget about food safety and fail to prepare and store food properly, which can result in foodborne illness.

These are just a few of the potential poison hazards that pose a danger while traveling, but does this mean you should cancel the tickets, put away the suitcases, and stay at home? Of course not! But in the midst of the adventure, be mindful of your environment and surroundings. Follow this checklist of prevention tips for poison-free travels.

Medicine and Personal Care Products

- Keep medicines and personal care products in original containers with child-resistant lids, and keep out of the reach of children.
- Do not store medications in suitcases and bags where children can access them.
- Keep a list of current medications in case you need to call the poison center for help.
- Check hotel rooms for medications that may have been left behind by previous occupants.

Outdoors

- Know your surroundings, and avoid critters and plants that could pose a threat.
- Do not eat plants or berries in the wild.
- Do not pet stray animals that may carry diseases.

Food & Water Safety

- Avoid foods that have been cooked earlier and are sitting at room temperature.
- In areas with unsafe water, consume bottled water, and be sure the cap is sealed before drinking.
- If cooking outdoors, bring enough plates for both raw and cooked foods to avoid cross-contamination.

Call the Poison Center

- If you or someone in your traveling party experience a poison exposure while traveling, call the poison center for help at 1-800-222-1222.
- Free, expert advice is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Sources: CDC

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