

# Raw drinking milk

Information for anyone who is already consuming or is considering consuming raw drinking milk or raw cream.

The majority of the milk we drink in the UK is heat-treated to kill off harmful bacteria. Raw drinking milk isn't – it goes from the animal to the bottle without any treatment.

Raw drinking milk may come from:

- cows
- sheep
- goats
- buffaloes
- horses

## Our advice on raw drinking milk and cream

We advise that raw or unpasteurised drinking milk and cream may contain harmful bacteria that can cause food poisoning. People with a weaker immune system are particularly vulnerable to food poisoning and should not consume it.

These include:

- people aged 65 or over
- pregnant women
- infants and small children
- people with a compromised immune system such as cancer patients

## Raw cow's drinking milk and the law

The sale of raw cow's drinking milk is legal in England, Wales and Northern Ireland but it can only be sold directly to the consumer by:

- [registered raw drinking milk production farms](#) at the farm gate (including vending machines and direct online sales) or farmhouse catering operation
- farmers at registered farmers' markets
- distributors using a vehicle as a shop such as a milk round

It's illegal to sell raw cow's drinking milk in any other setting.

Sales of raw drinking milk and raw cream are completely banned in Scotland. For more information, please see [Food Standards Scotland's Guidance on controls for raw milk](#).

## How we're protecting people who choose to consume raw drinking milk

Hygiene regulations are in place to protect consumers. Raw drinking milk offered for sale must be:

- from animals that are healthy and free from brucellosis and tuberculosis
- from a farm that complies with hygiene rules and is routinely inspected twice a year
- labelled with the appropriate health warning

Our dairy hygiene inspectors also undertake a verification sampling programme of raw cow's drinking milk. Local authorities undertake verification sampling for all other species.

Laboratory testing is carried out on behalf of the FSA by the UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA).

We regularly review the controls on raw drinking milk and cream. We want to support consumer choice but have to balance this alongside protecting the health of the public.