

EAT SAFE CHEESE

MAKE SURE YOUR CHEESE IS SAFE

Cheese can be **dangerous** and **unsafe** if **homemade** or bought from **street vendors**.

Do not buy cheese unless it is **refrigerated** in a **store** or **supermarket**.

Ensure cheese is **factory sealed**.

Keep germs and bacteria from growing by keeping your **cheese refrigerated at 41 °F**.

DANGERS OF RAW MILK AND RAW MILK PRODUCTS

Raw, unpasteurized milk can cause serious health risks to you and your family. Although milk and milk products provide many nutritional benefits, raw milk and foods made with raw milk can contain dangerous bacteria that may cause foodborne illness. Raw milk is milk from cows, goats, or sheep that has not been pasteurized to kill dangerous bacteria such as **Salmonella, E. coli, and Listeria**. These harmful bacteria can seriously affect the health of anyone who drinks or eats products made from raw milk. It can be especially dangerous to children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with weakened immune systems or health problems.



PASTEURIZED MILK

Pasteurization is the process of heating milk to a specific temperature for a set period of time to kill harmful bacteria. It is important to **keep pasteurized milk refrigerated** because it can spoil due to low levels of bacteria.

PREGNANCY AND RAW MILK



Pregnant women run an increased risk of becoming ill from Listeria. It may cause miscarriage, fetal death, or illness or death of a newborn. Consuming raw milk or raw milk products like cheese while pregnant can cause harm to the baby even if the mother doesn't feel sick.

If you are pregnant and think you may have consumed raw milk or raw milk products, see a doctor or healthcare provider immediately.

ILLNESS CAN BE CAUSED BY UNSAFE CHEESE

Germs and bacteria found in unsafe cheese can cause severe illness.

- Miscarriage/Fetal death
- Illness to unborn babies
- Vomiting
- Diarrhea (may be bloody)
- Fever
- Stomach cramps
- Swollen neck glands
- Death

If you have any of these symptoms after eating cheese, see your doctor immediately.

TYPES OF CHEESE SOLD BY STREET VENDORS



MAKE SAFE FOOD CHOICES

PROTECT YOURSELF AND YOUR FAMILY

Make sure the word **"pasteurized"** appears on product labels.

Don't hesitate to ask **your grocer or store clerk** whether your milk or milk products have been pasteurized.

Confirm that your milk or milk products have been **pasteurized** when buying at a **farm stand or farmers' market**.

Ensure that your milk and milk products **are not made from raw milk**.

SAFE TO EAT

Pasteurized:

- Milk and cream
- Hard cheeses like cheddar and extra hard cheeses like Parmesan
- Soft cheeses like Brie, Camembert, or blue-veined cheeses
- Mexican-style soft cheeses like Queso Fresco, Panela, Asadero, or Queso Blanco
- Processed cheeses
- Ricotta, cream, and cottage cheese
- Yogurt and frozen yogurt
- Pudding
- Ice cream

UNSAFE TO EAT

Unpasteurized:

- Milk and cream
- Soft cheeses like Brie, Camembert, or blue-veined cheeses
- Mexican-style soft cheeses like Queso Fresco, Panela, Asadero, or Queso Blanco
- Ricotta, cream, and cottage cheese
- Yogurt or frozen yogurt
- Pudding
- Ice cream



FOOD SAFETY TIPS

Steps to help protect you and your family from foodborne illness

- Buy cheese from a licensed seller or cheese maker
- Do not buy cheese from swap meets, door-to-door vendors, or street vendors, unless a Public Health Permit is prominently displayed
- Make sure cheese is refrigerated and cold at all times
- Buy cheese that is factory sealed and labeled
- Wash your hands when handling food
- Change and use clean utensils when cutting cheese, meat, poultry, and seafood



CONTACT US

If you have questions or suspect illegal manufacturing or sales of cheese or dairy products in your community, please contact the following:

California Department of Food and Agriculture
Headquarters
Milk and Dairy Food Safety
(916) 900- 5008
www.cdfa.ca.gov

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health
Environmental Health Division
Wholesale Food & Safety Program
(626) 813- 3477
www.publichealth.lacounty.gov

