

✓ [Evidence Based](#)

Raw Milk Benefits Skin, Allergies and Immunity

By [Dr. Josh Axe, DC, DNM, CN](#)

July 19, 2018



Listen to this Article

Powered by Instaread Articles

1x

Instaread

[Benefits](#) | [Nutrition Facts](#) | [Raw Milk vs. Conventional Milk](#) | [Where to Buy](#) | [Raw Milk Recipe Ideas](#) | [Risks and Side Effects](#)



If you've been told that drinking raw milk is dangerous, you'll be surprised to know that you've been misled. The truth about raw milk? An extensive look into research and claims made by the FDA and CDC related to raw milk being dangerous have been found

to be completely unwarranted.

It actually benefits your body in many ways, and although it might have earned a reputation among some for being dangerous, you shouldn't miss out on all this amazing superfood has to offer because raw milk benefits are truly impressive.

What is "raw milk" exactly? It's milk that comes from grass-fed cows, is unpasteurized and unhomogenized. This means raw milk contains all of its natural enzymes, fatty acids, vitamins and minerals — making it what many refer to as a "complete food."

But can't raw milk cause problems due to the risk of consuming bacteria? The risk of this happening is very, *very* low. In fact, according to medical researcher Dr. Ted Beals, M.D., you are 35,000 times more likely to get sick from other foods than you are from raw milk. (1)

The CDC reports that there are an estimated 48 million foodborne illnesses diagnosed each year. *Of these 48 million illnesses, only about 42 (about 0.0005 percent!) each year are due to consumption of fresh, unprocessed (raw) milk.* (2)

Dr. Chris Kesser did a thorough investigation to get the true impact of raw milk illness and death, as the CDC makes it sound inevitable, and found that your chances of becoming hospitalized from a bacterial illness caused by raw milk is three times *less* than your chance of dying in a plane crash. In fact, he discovered that you have a better chance of death by infection from raw oysters than you do of ever getting sick at all from raw milk!

As you can see, most accusations and concerns over raw milk have been overstated, and therefore its health benefits remain underrated. Raw milk benefits are numerous and can help address a large number of nutritional deficiencies that millions of people, especially those eating the standard American diet, are currently experiencing. For instance, raw milk benefits allergies and skin, all while containing beneficial nutrients without the processing dangers.

Benefits

1. Reduces Allergies

Studies now suggest that children who drink raw milk are 50 percent less likely to develop allergies and 41 percent less likely to develop asthma compared to children who don't. (3) A study published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* involved 8,000 children with various diets, and one of the conclusions that researchers made was that by drinking raw milk, children experienced "naturally immunizing" effects. (4)

As documented on the Real Milk website, many other studies carried out over the past century have shown that raw milk benefits and supports children's growth and development in other ways too, including increasing immunity against infections, boosting dental health and supporting skeletal growth, for example. (5)

You might be wondering: How can raw milk reduce allergies, and isn't dairy tied to high rates of intolerance or sensitivities? Nutrients like probiotics, vitamin D and immunoglobulins (antibodies) found in raw milk naturally boost the immune system and reduce the risk of allergies in both children and adults. Enzymes found in raw milk help with digestion but are often reduced or destroyed during pasteurization, which can contribute to lactose intolerance.

2. Helps Improve Skin Health

Dairy might have a bad reputation when it comes to causing or worsening acne and skin inflammation, but this is far from the case with raw milk.

As we've seen, the benefits of raw milk are numerous, but surprisingly one of the most common reasons that people consume it is to benefit their skin. The success stories of people consuming raw milk to improve conditions such as psoriasis, eczema and acne are very widely reported.

Raw milk benefits the skin for the following reasons:

- It contains healthy fats: Because raw milk contains large amounts of healthy saturated fats and omega-3 fats, it supports skin hydration. In fact, some people don't only consume raw milk, but they use raw milk as a moisturizer topically. Today, goat milk soap bars are popular around Europe and making their way to the U.S. more often, and recipes for homemade moisturizing face creams using raw milk can be found all over the Internet.
- It supplies probiotics: Probiotics in raw milk can kill off or balance bad bacteria in your gut, which can dramatically affect the health of your skin. Research shows that inflammation and unbalanced gut flora contribute to skin issues such as acne and eczema.

3. Helps Prevent Nutrient Deficiencies

According to the USDA, nearly 300 calories a day in the average American's diet (out of a total 2,076 calories) can be attributed to added sugars or sweeteners.

In comparison, nutrient-rich foods like raw dairy, fruits and vegetables only contribute about 424 calories, although they should make a much greater proportion of nutrients. (6) You can see why deficiencies in nutrients like magnesium, potassium, vitamin A and

vitamin K are so common.

One serving of raw milk contains about 400 milligrams of calcium, 50 milligrams of magnesium and 500 milligrams of potassium. (7)

These minerals are vitally important for cellular function, hydration, building bone density, blood circulation, detoxification, muscle health and metabolism. These happen to be three minerals many children and adults are deficient in, which is especially problematic considering most people have a high sodium intake.

4. May Fight *H. pylori* Infection

The whey proteins and good bacteria in fermented milk might help combat *H. pylori* infection. (8) *H. pylori* sometimes causes no symptoms but some people who carry it develop uncomfortable or even severe digestive symptoms such as vomiting or stomach ulcers.

5. Can Be Used to Make Probiotic Foods

Probiotics are microorganisms that line your gut and support nutrient absorption. They also help protect you from foreign invaders like *E. coli* and parasites. The best way to include probiotics in your diet is to get them in their most natural state, which includes raw milk products, such as cheese, kefir and yogurt.

Real, raw and organic probiotic yogurt, cheeses and kefir have been consumed by some of the healthiest populations living around the world for thousands of years (such as those who call the famous Blue Zones home). Some disorders probiotic foods are known to help with include:

- Colon cancer
- Diarrhea
- Inflammatory bowel disease
- Intestinal infections
- Irritable bowel syndrome
- Skin infections
- Weakened immune system
- Urinary track infections
- Vaginal yeast infection

6. Doesn't Contain Added Sugar or Synthetic Ingredients

In addition to pasteurization, conventional milk also usually undergoes a homogenization process. Homogenization is a high-pressure process that breaks down fat into tiny particles — however, fat subjected to high heat and pressure becomes oxidized and rancid.

Many low-fat dairy products also have thickening agents added to make up for lost texture, and some have even been tied to rising rates of inflammatory diseases like cancer. Raw milk needs no added thickeners or shelf-stabilizers and also doesn't contain added sugar or flavors.

Most foods have some levels of natural sugar, including raw dairy, which has the type called lactose. The natural sugar in dairy is balanced with other nutrients and therefore not a concern (even healthy for you in moderation).

However, many dairy products now contain multiple added ingredients, including extra sugar or artificial sweeteners, to boost taste. Added sugars come in many forms (for example, cane juice, corn sweetener, dextrose, fructose and high fructose corn syrup) and are unnecessary and harmful in excess.

Nutrition Facts

Raw milk is truly one of the most nutrient-dense foods in the world and has a nutritional profile unlike any other food, explaining the many raw milk benefits. I understand if you've been cautious in the past about drinking raw milk because of all the negative media it might have earned, but I'm sure you'll change your mind once you learn why more and more people are drinking raw milk every day.

Some of the main reasons that *over 10 million Americans now drink raw milk* on a regular basis include the following raw milk benefits:

- Healthier skin, hair and nails
- Nutrient absorption
- Stronger immune system
- Reduced allergies
- Increased bone density
- Neurological support
- Weight loss
- Help building lean muscle mass
- Better digestion

What exactly makes raw milk such an incredible superfood? Let's take a look at its unique nutritional profile, and it will become clear.

Fat-Soluble Vitamins A, D and K2

Because raw milk comes from cows or goats grazing on grass, research studies have shown that it contains a higher level of heart-healthy, cancer-killing, fat-soluble vitamins than milk that comes from factory-farm cows. (9)

Studies have shown that one of the most common deficiencies in children is a lack of fat-soluble vitamins. These vitamins support the brain and nervous system and are crucial for development, focus and brain function. Fat-soluble vitamins also support bone density and help naturally balance hormones; however, they're significantly decreased following pasteurization. (10)

Short Chain Fatty Acids, CLA and Omega-3s

In addition to being high in anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids, raw milk from grass-fed animals is a rich source of butyrate, a short chain fatty acid that's widely known to control health issues related to inflammation, slow metabolism and stress resistance. (11)

Additionally, raw, grass-fed milk is packed with conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), which according to Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer has been tied to cancer prevention, healthier cholesterol levels and can even help reduce body fat. (13)

Essential Minerals and Electrolytes: Calcium, Magnesium and Potassium

Raw milk is one of the highest sources of minerals and electrolytes, which many people don't get enough of. Unfortunately, a significant percentage of these minerals is lost during high-heat pasteurization. (14)

Whey Protein and Immunoglobulins

By far, the best-tasting curds and whey protein come from raw milk. Whey protein is fantastic for anyone who's looking to burn fat and build or retain lean muscle. Whey is high in the following enzymes and proteins (amino acids) and the best way to get these immunity boosters is in their natural forms: alpha-lactalbumin, beta-lactoglobulin, bovine serum albumin and immunoglobulin.

Probiotics: Kefir, Cheese and Yogurt

Probiotics are only found in small amounts in raw milk, but when you ferment raw milk to make foods like kefir, yogurt or cheese, the good bacteria dramatically increase. In fact, there are no other foods in the world as naturally high in probiotics as cultured dairy products.

And these are just the tip of the iceberg when it comes to raw milk benefits. One thing to clear up here is that raw milk doesn't just come from cows. Researchers have carried out comparative studies on the properties of goat milk compared to those of cow milk and have found reason to believe that goat milk can help prevent diseases, such as anemia and bone demineralization, sometimes better than cow milk can.

Goat milk has been linked with special benefits for digestive and metabolic utilization of minerals, such as iron, calcium, phosphorus and magnesium. (15)

Raw Milk vs. Conventional Milk

Dairy products have gotten a bad rap over the years, but this is actually mostly due to the pasteurization process. When milk is pasteurized, it destroys many of the nutrients that make raw milk beneficial. Why is pasteurization even performed in the first place then? Because it exposes milk to very high temperatures, it can also kill harmful bacteria that are possibly able to make their way into the milk. However, as mentioned above, it's very rare for these types of bacteria to be found in milk to begin with.

Key nutrients and enzymes are greatly reduced during the pasteurization process. If you consider the fact that many of these nutrients are not only reduced, but altered from their original states, you can understand that some of these nutrients are completely unavailable for your body to use and very difficult to digest.

Vitamin B and C levels are decreased as well. In multiple studies, it's been found low-temperature pasteurization decreases vitamin C content by up to 25 percent, along with the content of B vitamins, iron and calcium. Further reductions in nutritional value takes place when milk sits on supermarket shelves sometimes for weeks where it's kept until sold. (16) Some have found that following pasteurization, vitamin C (ascorbic acid) is oxidized into dehydroascorbic acid, which is an inactive, degraded form of vitamin C that does not have the same benefits as natural vitamin C. Other studies have found that pasteurization in other food products reduces overall antioxidant activities by about 55 percent to 60 percent and reduces vitamin B2 concentrations by up 48 percent. (17, 18)

Allergies and lactose intolerance are higher with pasteurization as well. Another major negative of pasteurization is that it destroys the digestive enzymes needed to break down and absorb certain nutrients. In the previously mentioned study, researchers found lactase (the enzyme in dairy) levels are greatly reduced with pasteurization, which is one explanation as to why so many people are lactose-intolerant. A survey conducted by the Weston A. Price Foundation found that of 700 families interviewed, amazingly about 80 percent of those diagnosed with lactose intolerance stopped having symptoms when they switched to raw milk.

To put things into perspective, according to certain medical studies, the following nutrients are destroyed or altered during pasteurization include:

Where to Buy

Raw dairy isn't always easy to find, since laws differ from state to state regarding consumers' rights to buy raw milk. There are three main places you can look for raw dairy products:

1. Local farmers market — I go to my local farmers market and buy raw goat's milk kefir, raw cheeses and plain raw milk. In the state I live it's labeled "for pet consumption only," and while I do give raw milk to my dog, my whole family enjoys the benefits of raw milk from the farmers market.

2. Whole Foods Market — I buy a lot of “raw” cheeses at health food stores. Whole Foods has a large selection of raw cheeses, including raw sheep cheese, which is my absolute favorite. For a healthy and delicious appetizer or dessert, my family will dip our cheese in raw local honey.
3. Online — There are certain online companies that sell raw dairy products directly to consumers, including Beyond Organic, Wise Choice Market and Real Milk. These retailers will have raw cheeses shipped right to your front door.

You will likely come to find that there are different kinds of raw milks or raw dairy products available from these retailers, including those from cows and also from sheep or goats. Raw goat's milk can be a great alternative to cow milk, since for many people it's even easier to digest. It can be beneficial to experiment with different types of raw dairy products to see which you enjoy most and benefit most from.

Raw Milk Recipe Ideas

Here are several delicious ways to enjoy raw milk at home:

- [Protein Shake Recipes for Building Strength and Muscle](#)
- [40 Healthy Smoothie Recipes](#)
- [41 Wild and Healthy Waffle Recipes](#)
- [How to Make Your Own Amasai](#)

Concerned about how raw milk will taste and if you will need to add a sweetener to achieve the results you want?

If you're accustomed to eating sweetened dairy products, such as fruit-flavored yogurt or chocolate milk, then the taste of unsweetened raw dairy might not be what you're used to.

However, you'll be happy to know that most people absolutely love the flavor of raw dairy, and many claim that it tastes much, much better than the store-bought kinds. Instead of buying sweetened dairy, try sweetening your own raw dairy when needed with small amounts of natural sweeteners, such as raw honey, coconut sugar, dates and organic stevia leaf.

How to Use Raw Milk on Your Skin

To benefit from raw milk's skin-soothing nutrients, you can easily make your own raw milk face cream. Simply mix the ingredients below, then put the mixture onto freshly washed skin and leave for two to five minutes before rinsing off.

- 2 tablespoons of raw cream
- 2 tablespoons of raw honey
- 2 teaspoons of lemon juice

If you can't find raw cream, try using raw kefir instead, which is quite possibly the highest probiotic-rich food on the planet. Using kefir as a face wash and also consuming it internally can kill off bad bacteria on both your skin and within your GI tract that are the main cause of dry, flaking skin and acne.

Risks and Side Effects

Although millions of people can attest that raw milk is safe to consume, delicious and beneficial in many ways, there are always still risks to be aware of. According to the CDC, past cases of foodborne illnesses associated with raw milk consumption have been due to bacteria (such as *Brucella*, *Listeria*, *Mycobacterium bovis*), salmonella, shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli* (E. coli), and certain parasites or viruses. The risk is highest among infants and young children, the elderly, pregnant women, and people with weakened immune systems due to other medical problems.

Keep in mind that the nutritional/mineral content of milk varies depending on conditions where it was produced, soil quality, geographical location, species of cow, health of the animal, how fresh it is and more. Buy raw dairy products from a reputable distributor, read customer reviews, ask your local farmers market for recommendations, store products in the refrigerator and consume within a short period of time for the safest and best results.

Final Thoughts

- Raw milk comes from cows, goats, sheep or other animals that have usually been grass-fed and raised in humane conditions. The milk is unpasteurized and therefore retains more of its natural nutrients and benefits.
- Raw milk benefits include improved immunity, healthier skin, reduced allergies, healthier growth and development, lower risk for nutrient deficiencies, and much more.
- Real milk has been consumed safely for many centuries, can be found online or at farmers markets, and can also be obtained from raw cheeses, yogurt or kefir in order to get raw milk benefits in your diet.