

## **Raw Milk Questions & Answers**

### **Is unpasteurized milk a better, or even the best, source of calcium?**

Calcium is a basic chemical element. The heating process of pasteurization does not affect the levels of calcium in milk. A study in preterm infants confirms that pasteurization does not change calcium absorption. In Canada, we add Vitamin D to milk to help ensure that calcium can be absorbed.

### **Does unpasteurized milk contain more amino acids?**

Amino acids are the building blocks of proteins. They are very stable at the temperatures reached in pasteurization. In fact, pasteurization may help to break down some of the proteins in milk so that we can more readily absorb the amino acids.

### **Does unpasteurized milk prevent allergic diseases?**

This is unproven. Some studies to date suggest that consuming unpasteurized milk may lower a child's chance of developing allergic diseases. These are preliminary studies with weak methodology, and the authors do not pretend that their studies prove this claim. Given the risk of infectious disease, none of these authors concludes that people should drink unpasteurized milk.

### **Does drinking unpasteurized milk provide increased fat absorption?**

Most people need to reduce, not increase, fat in their diets. Two studies suggest that pre-term infants may be able to absorb more fat from unpasteurized milk. Pre-term infants need lots of energy from fat to help them grow. The rest of us generally want to limit our fat intake.

### **Is unpasteurized milk easier to digest for those who are lactose intolerant?**

No scientific studies support this claim. Evidence suggests that fermented milk products such as yogurt and kefir may be easier to digest for people who are lactose intolerant. There is no science to prove the same is true of unpasteurized milk.

### **Does consumption of unpasteurized milk help prevent cancer?**

Milk contains conjugated linoleic acid (CLA), a chemical that helps prevent cancer. Studies show that pasteurization does not change the CLA content in milk products. Even the intense heating used to produce yogurt does not affect CLA.

### **Does unpasteurized milk protect against infectious diseases because it contains antibodies that boost the immune system?**

The overwhelming body of scientific literature indicates that pasteurization prevents infectious disease.

To claim unpasteurized milk protect against infectious diseases because it contains antibodies requires much more than just showing that there are bovine antibodies in unpasteurized milk. It also requires proving that pasteurization destroys most or all of these antibodies, which is false.

To claim antibodies in raw milk boots the immune system requires evidence that cow antibodies actually prevent disease in humans. This is unproven. Human antibodies from a human mother's milk help protect infants against human strains of disease, but there is no evidence to support that antibodies from an animal's immune system would be of any benefit.

Moreover, even if pasteurization affects antibodies, this theoretical 'risk' is insignificant compared with the real risk of the infectious organisms that are present in unpasteurized milk.