**What is raw milk?**

- **Pasteurization** is the process of heating milk to a high enough temperature for enough time to kill harmful germs in the milk.

- **Raw milk** has not been pasteurized to kill harmful germs, including bacteria, viruses, and parasites that cause diseases.

- Before most milk in the U.S. was pasteurized, raw milk was a common source of illness.

**Is all raw milk risky?**

- Even healthy animals may carry germs that can contaminated milk. Small numbers of bacteria can multiply and grow in raw milk from the time it is collected until the time a person drinks it.

- Following good safety practices on the farm can reduce but not get rid of the chance of milk contamination.

- A negative test isn’t a guarantee that raw milk is free from harmful germs. One batch of a farm’s raw milk can test negative for harmful germs, but the next batch can contain them.

**What can I do to lower my risk of getting sick?**

- **Choose pasteurized milk and dairy products.** Buy products that say “pasteurized” on the label.

- **Refrigerate milk and dairy products at 40°F or below.** Never leave perishable food like dairy products out for more than 2 hours (or 1 hour if exposed to temperatures above 90°F, like a hot car or picnic).

- **Throw away expired milk and dairy products.**

Choosing pasteurized milk is the best way to keep you and your family safe.