

News Release

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Health officials investigating Salmonella cases linked to raw milk

The Minnesota Department of Health (MDH) is investigating a cluster of five illnesses caused by the bacteria *Salmonella* Typhimurium among children from the Twin Cities metro. The families of two children reported that they consumed unpasteurized milk. Information could not be obtained from the remaining families, but the bacteria from the cases were found to be identical through laboratory analysis. This indicates the infections came from the same source.

The cases include children ranging in age from 3 months to 10 years who became ill between the end of June and early July. One child was hospitalized.

Unpasteurized milk, also known as raw milk, is milk that has not been heated to a temperature high enough to kill harmful germs from fecal contamination sometimes found in the milk. These germs can include *Campylobacter*, *E. coli*, *Cryptosporidium*, and *Salmonella*. One child in this cluster of cases was infected with two types of pathogenic *E. coli* in addition to *Salmonella*, emphasizing the possibility of getting multiple infections from raw milk.

“Even healthy animals can carry these germs and have them in their milk,” said Maria Bye, senior epidemiologist in the Zoonotic Diseases Unit at MDH. “Consuming any unpasteurized milk is risky, no matter how clean the operation from which it is purchased.”

People infected with *Salmonella* Typhimurium can develop diarrhea, fever and abdominal cramps from six hours to several days after consuming contaminated foods or touching infected animals. The illness typically lasts from four to seven days. In some instances, people may get so sick that they may need to be hospitalized. Children under age 5, adults over age 65 and those with weakened

immune systems are most at risk for severe illness and hospitalization.

MDH is working to identify the source of the unpasteurized milk causing these Salmonella infections and prevent additional illnesses.

“If you have raw or unpasteurized milk in your refrigerator, please do not consume it,” Bye said, “If you have developed gastrointestinal illness after consuming unpasteurized milk, contact your health care provider.”

To help prevent more people from getting sick, MDH is asking anyone with information about gastrointestinal illnesses shortly after consuming unpasteurized milk at the end of June or beginning of July to fill out a [confidential online survey](#) or email health.foodill@state.mn.us.

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