

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT MILK



## MILK SAFETY & QUALITY

### **QUESTION: Are there antibiotics in milk?**

**ANSWER:** There are no antibiotics in your milk. Farmers work with their veterinarians to provide medicines to cows only when they are sick – just like you may work with your doctor to provide medicines to treat you and your family when ill. All milk – regular and organic – is tested multiple times before it gets to you, and if it tests positive for even the slightest amount of antibiotics, it is safely discarded and never reaches the store. On a conventional farm, the cow is taken from the milking herd for treatment, and not returned to the herd until her milk tests free of antibiotics. On an organic farm, that cow permanently leaves the herd.<sup>1,2</sup>

### **QUESTION: Are there hormones added to milk?**

**ANSWER:** No. Just like you, cows need the hormones they naturally produce for proper body function. Hormones are naturally present in many foods of either plant or animal origin, including milk. Although it is very uncommon, some farmers choose to supplement their cows with rbST, an FDA-approved synthetic hormone, to help with milk production. Science shows that it is safe for cows and has no effect on humans or the hormone levels in the milk itself.<sup>3</sup> In response to consumer requests, the majority of dairy farmers in New England no longer use rbST.

### **QUESTION: Is it safe to serve my family raw or unpasteurized milk?**

**ANSWER:** No. According to the Food and Drug Administration and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, pasteurization is a simple, effective method to kill potentially harmful bacteria, like E. coli and salmonella, without affecting the taste or nutritional value of milk. It's a matter of food safety.<sup>4,5</sup>

### **QUESTION: Are there GMOs in my milk?**

**ANSWER:** No. Some cows eat feed containing bioengineered corn and soybeans, which cows digest the same way as they do non-bioengineered grains. Bioengineered DNA has never been detected in milk.<sup>6</sup>

### **QUESTION: Are lactose intolerance and a milk allergy the same thing?**

**ANSWER:** No. Lactose intolerance and milk allergies are two different things. It's important to understand which condition you have.

- **Lactose intolerance** is a difficulty digesting lactose (the natural sugar in milk) due to a deficiency in lactase (a digestive enzyme).<sup>7</sup> You may still be able to enjoy dairy if you have a lactose intolerance!
- A **milk allergy** is an immune reaction to the protein in milk, which requires you to avoid dairy.<sup>8</sup> About 2 percent of infants have this allergy, but many outgrow it by age 4.

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**QUESTION: What is A2 milk and how does it differ from regular milk?**

**ANSWER:** Two common variants of beta-casein protein found in cow's milk are A1 and A2. Some cows produce milk with an equal ratio of both A1 and A2 proteins, and some cows only produce the A2 protein. Milk can be tested for the beta-casein that it contains, which is how A2 cows are found. A2 milk offers the same nutrition and health benefits as regular milk. Any specific claims about A2 milk remain a theory and are not currently supported by science.<sup>9</sup>

**QUESTION: What is different about organic milk?**

**ANSWER:** In terms of quality, safety, and nutrition, there's no difference between organic and regular milk. They contain the same amount of nine essential nutrients per serving. The difference is how they are produced on the farm. Some organic farming practices include<sup>2</sup>:

- Cows must eat certified organic feed. Cows are given access to pasture for a minimum of 120 days in the grazing season. They eat supplemental feed as well to make sure they get enough protein.
- Antibiotics are prohibited and cows requiring treatment must be sold to non-organic farms. Many conventional dairy farmers use these same management practices but choose not to undergo the rigorous organic certification process.

**QUESTION: Do alternative beverages have the same nutrition as milk?**

**ANSWER:** No. Alternative beverages like rice, almond, and coconut are fortified with a few key nutrients, but lack many of the vitamins and minerals found naturally in cow's milk. Also, they often contain added ingredients like stabilizers, syrups, added sugar, salt, and thickeners. Dairy milk has only three ingredients – cow's milk, vitamin A, and vitamin D. Not only is cow's milk packed with calcium, it contains eight other essential nutrients. Milk is a source of high quality protein, with eight times as much protein as an almond beverage.<sup>10</sup>



## Dairy questions?

Get answers at  
**NewEnglandDairy.com**  
or reach out to  
**info@NewEnglandDairy.com** to  
connect with a dairy farmer near you.

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2. Northeast Organic Farming Association of Vermont. Guidelines for Organic Certification of Dairy Livestock. <https://www.ams.usda.gov/sites/default/files/media/Dairy%20-%20Guidelines.pdf>. Accessed September 20, 2018.

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4. Raw Milk Questions and Answers. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website. <https://www.cdc.gov/foodsafety/rawmilk/raw-milk-questions-and-answers.html>. Updated September 1, 2017. Accessed September 18, 2018.

5. The Dangers of Raw Milk: Unpasteurized Milk Can Pose a Serious Health Risk. U.S. Food & Drug Administration website. <https://www.fda.gov/Food/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/ucm079516.htm>. Updated November 15, 2017. Accessed September 18, 2018.

6. Van Eenennaam L. Alison. Genetic Engineering and Animal Feed. University of California Division of Agriculture & Natural Resources. 2005; 81839(6):1-4. <https://anrcatalog.ucanr.edu/pdf/8183.pdf>. Accessed September 20, 2018.

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9. What's A2 Milk? New England Dairy & Food Council website. <https://www.newenglanddairyandfoodcouncil.org/whats-a2-milk/>. Updated January 18, 2018. Accessed September 19, 2018.

10. Dairy Milk vs. Almond Milk and Milk Alternatives. MilkPEP website. <https://milklife.com/articles/nutrition/dairy-milk-vs-almond-milk-and-milk-alternatives>. Accessed September 19, 2018.