



Scott County Board of Health

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Position Statement on Raw Milk

The Scott County Board of Health supports the consumption of pasteurized milk and does not support the direct-to-consumer sale or distribution of raw milk for human consumption.

Raw milk is milk that has not been pasteurized. Pasteurization is a process that heats milk to a specific temperature for a minimum amount of time to destroy disease-causing germs. Pasteurized milk provides the same important nutrients found in raw milk without associated risks.

Raw milk can contain disease-causing bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens even when it is produced and handled under sanitary conditions. These pathogens can cause serious illness, including infections that may require hospitalization. The risk of serious illness is particularly high for young children, older adults, pregnant women, and persons with weakened immune systems.

The Scott County Board of Health recognizes that Iowa law allows certain forms of raw milk production and sale, including direct-to-consumer. Regardless of the legal framework, the Board of Health believes that preventing foodborne illness is an important public health responsibility and that pasteurization is a practical and effective food-safety measure.

The Board of Health also recognizes that individuals make their own choices about the foods they consume. Those choices should be informed by accurate information about the potential health risks associated with raw milk. Therefore, the Board of Health supports continued public education about the risks associated with raw milk and strong food-safety practices that protect Iowans from preventable foodborne illness.

Original Adoption: February 2013

Revised: January 2023; Revised October 2026

