



In light of ongoing public concerns about food borne illness, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) continues to advise those who wish to reduce their risk of food borne infections to avoid the consumption of raw (unpasteurized) milk, products that are derived from raw milk, and raw-milk cheeses that are not aged for at least 60 days. While this recommendation applies to all persons, PADOH advises that those at higher risk of severe food borne illness (the elderly, young children, pregnant women, and persons with compromised immune systems) should avoid raw milk consumption. While the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture permitting process can enhance the safety of raw milk, there are no measures that can render raw milk as safe as milk that has been heat sterilized (pasteurized).

On September 12th, PADOH released information regarding an outbreak of *Campylobacter* infections associated with consumption of raw milk. The following provides an update of the information previously released.

As of September 24, 2008, there are:

- 25 persons with culture-confirmed *Campylobacter* infections who specifically mentioned raw milk consumption from a specific dairy.
- One person with culture-confirmed *Campylobacter* infection who specifically mentioned raw milk consumption but did not specify the source of the raw milk.
- 43 other persons with a gastrointestinal illness compatible with *Campylobacter* infection but without culture confirmation who specifically mentioned raw milk consumption from a specific dairy.
- Most illness onset among these 60 persons are between September 1-8, 2008.
- One person became ill on September 19th, after consuming milk purchased two weeks earlier, and another purchased milk from an off-farm store on September 11th and became ill several days later.
- Among all other persons recalling a specific date the raw milk was obtained, the dates are during a narrow period of late August and early September.
- Among the 25 culture confirmed persons, the median age is 29 years, with a range of 5 years to 61 years, and 68 percent are male.
- Among the culture-confirmed cases, all but three are residents of Montgomery or Bucks County. Two of the remaining three are from out-of-state, but were visiting Bucks County when the raw milk was purchased.

Campylobacter is one of the more common types of bacteria that have been associated with illness due to raw milk consumption. Earlier this year, an outbreak of *Campylobacter* infections involving 70 persons who consumed raw milk was identified in association with a Pennsylvania bed and breakfast establishment.

A fact sheet on *Campylobacter* infections can be found on the PADOH website at the following address:

<http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=171&q=230338&healthPNavCt r=&TNID=4630#4630>