

PENNY SAVER NEWS

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What's Your Milk Choice?

Whole, 2% or skim? Chocolate, strawberry or white? Organic or regular? These are the usual choices we make when buying milk. They each give you lots of protein, and plenty of calcium for healthy bones and blood pressure. No matter which you choose, they're all safe. They won't make you sick (but all the fat in whole milk may eventually plug up your arteries.)

Unfortunately there's been an increase recently in the number of people wanting yet another choice, one that is not so safe. Some people are going to great lengths to get raw, unpasteurized milk. They have to go to great lengths because it is illegal to sell raw milk in most states.

Years ago, whether the people drinking it knew or not, raw milk was the cause of a lot of illness. Scarlet fever, tuberculosis and undulant fever were much more common years ago, partly because they were carried by raw milk. More recently we recognized that a disease called Q-fever was also carried by raw milk. And just in the last several years there have been outbreaks of illness caused by Listeria, Salmonella and several other bacteria that came from drinking raw milk. In 2001 over 300 people got sick. In 2002 there were almost 200 people who got sick from raw milk.

Sometimes bacteria in raw milk cause vomiting and diarrhea. Sometimes they cause fevers. Sometimes they are the kind that cause miscarriages or infant deaths. Some cause severe kidney disease, kidney failure or blood in the urine. Healthy adults might only have a little diarrhea, but grandparents, small children or anyone whose

immune system is not very strong might get very, very sick.

The most recent illnesses have come from E. coli 0157:H7 in raw milk. Just last December at least 8 people in Washington state ended up in the hospital due to E. coli. Several of the people were children. Two of these had long stays in the hospital to recover. They were lucky to survive, since this E. coli bacteria frequently kills children. Survivors often have such damaged kidneys that they never recover completely but suffer the effects for the rest of their lives.

All of this illness can easily be avoided, by only drinking pasteurized milk. The process of pasteurization does not add anything to milk. The only thing it takes out of milk are the live bacteria. Milk is heated for a short time, just long enough to kill any bacteria that might make us sick. The vitamins in milk are not ones that are damaged by heat. The protein and the minerals, such as calcium, are not damaged by heat. Only the bacteria are killed.

Pasteurized milk is not sterilized. There might still be some live bacteria in it. But these bacteria are not the kind that will make us sick. If we keep the milk too long or let it sit out and get too warm, these bacteria will start to grow and make the milk spoil. It will smell or taste bad. Those are signs to us that something's growing in there, and we should not use it. Unfortunately the bacteria that make us sick don't usually make milk taste or smell bad.

People who drink raw milk can't tell that there are live, dangerous bacteria in it. They only find out when they get sick and end up in the hospital. Make sure all the milk you and your family drink is pasteurized. It will keep you much more healthy.

This week's recipe is a Florida version of an old favorite, bread pudding with an orange flavor. Scalding the milk heats it enough to start to cook the protein. That's

hotter than the milk gets when it is pasteurized. But scalded milk makes the pudding a little more solid when it is cooked. It's dessert for four. Enjoy!

Florida Bread Pudding

1/4 C sugar (or Splenda®)	1 Tbsp melted butter or margarine
1 egg, lightly beaten	½ tsp grated orange peel
2 C low-fat or skim milk	1 C bread cubes
1 tsp vanilla	½ C raisins
½ tsp salt, optional	

Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray a 1 quart baking dish with pan spray. Mix sugar, butter, egg, vanilla, orange peel (and salt if using) in large bowl. Scald milk by putting in a heavy saucepan and heating over medium heat just until bubbles start to form around the edges of the pan. Don't let it boil. Add hot milk to sugar mixture and stir to mix well. Add bread cubes and raisins. Mix until all bread is wet. Pour into baking dish. Put dish in a flat cake pan and put hot water in the cake pan. Bake 1 hour, or until a knife inserted into center of pudding comes out clean. Serve warm, or refrigerate and serve cold. Serves 4.

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