

Statewide Increase in Salmonellosis Cases who Report Raw Milk Consumption in Pennsylvania

DATE:	9/15/2025
TO:	Health Alert Network
FROM:	Debra L. Bogen, MD, FAAP, Secretary of Health
SUBJECT:	Statewide Increase in Salmonellosis Cases who Report Raw Milk Consumption in Pennsylvania
DISTRIBUTION:	Statewide
LOCATION:	Statewide
STREET ADDRESS:	n/a
COUNTY:	n/a
MUNICIPALITY:	n/a
ZIP CODE:	n/a

This transmission is a “Health Advisory,” which provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

HOSPITALS: PLEASE SHARE WITH ALL MEDICAL, PEDIATRIC, INFECTION CONTROL, NURSING AND LABORATORY STAFF IN YOUR HOSPITAL

EMS COUNCILS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

FQHCs: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

LOCAL HEALTH JURISDICTIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS APPROPRIATE

PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATIONS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR

Summary

- The Pennsylvania Department of Health has identified an increase in the percentage of salmonellosis cases in 2025 that reported consuming raw or unpasteurized milk prior to illness onset compared to the previous 5 years.
- Raw or unpasteurized milk is a vehicle for enteric pathogens and has been associated with large outbreaks in the United States and in Pennsylvania.
- The observed increase in raw milk consumption among salmonellosis cases was particularly high among pediatric salmonellosis cases. Geographically, this increase was highest in the southeast, south central, and north central regions of the state.
- Health care providers are encouraged to order culture testing, when possible, as cultures produce isolates that are necessary for whole genome sequencing. Data generated using whole genome sequencing are essential for identifying Pennsylvania cases linked to both in-state and multistate outbreaks as well as to potentially implicated products.
- If you have additional questions about this guidance, please contact DOH at 1-877- PA- HEALTH (1-877-724-3258) or your local health department.

Raw or unpasteurized milk is a known vehicle for enteric pathogens ([Williams et al., 2023](#)). Previous research estimated that people who consume raw milk or raw milk products were **838 times more likely** to experience an illness than people who consume pasteurized milk products ([Costard et al., 2017](#)). Raw milk is associated with large enteric disease outbreaks across the United States and in Pennsylvania (Lind et al., 2007), including a recent salmonellosis outbreak with 171 cases identified ([Weinstein et al., 2025](#)). The risk of illness from pathogens that were associated with the consumption of raw milk is particularly high in pregnant women, children under 5, and immunocompromised individuals. In Pennsylvania, raw milk sales from permitted dairies is legal.

In August 2025, epidemiologists in the Pennsylvania Department of Health (DOH) conducted a review of salmonellosis exposure data from cases reported from 2020-2025. Results of this analysis found that the proportion of salmonellosis cases who reported consuming raw milk during the seven days prior to illness onset was higher in 2025 (3.4%) than the previous 5 years (2020-2024, see Figure 1 below).

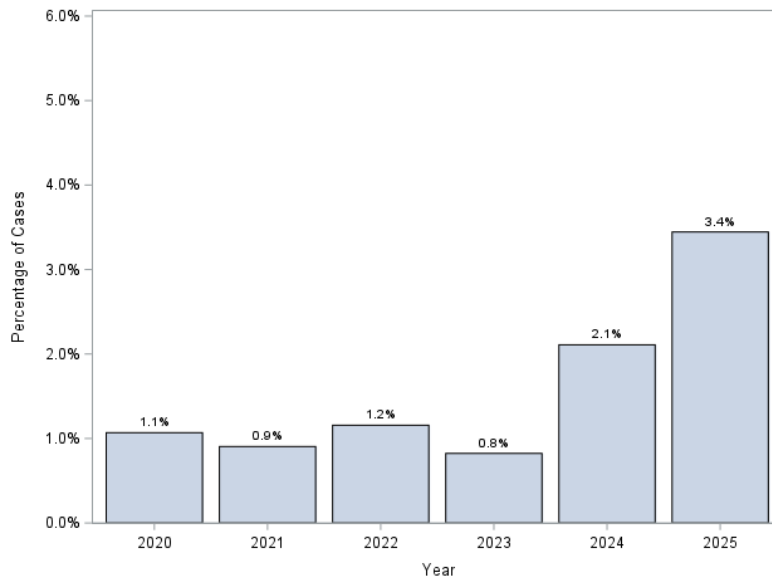


Figure 1. Percentage of salmonellosis cases who reported consuming raw or unpasteurized milk prior to illness onset from 2020-2025. Data includes salmonellosis cases who responded “yes” or “no” to consuming raw or unpasteurized milk during the seven days prior to illness onset in data reported to DOH.

While this increase was observed in statewide data, the percentage of salmonellosis cases who reported consuming raw milk in 2025 was highest in the southeast (4.8%), south central (4.5%), and north central (3.9%) regions. Additionally, this increase appeared to be especially high among pediatric cases, with 7.0% of salmonellosis cases less than 18 years old reporting consuming raw milk in the seven days prior to illness onset in 2025 (Figure 2).

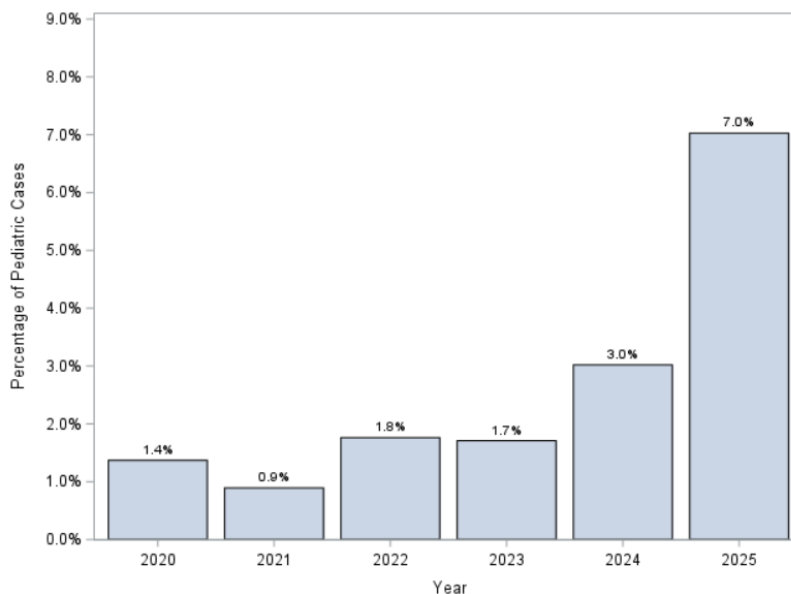


Figure 2. Percentage of pediatric (age <18) salmonellosis cases who reported consuming raw or unpasteurized milk prior to illness onset from 2020-2025 by age. Data includes salmonellosis cases who responded “yes” or “no” to consuming raw or unpasteurized milk during the seven days prior to illness onset in data reported to DOH.

An increase in raw milk consumption among people who develop salmonellosis in Pennsylvania is a public health concern. To reduce the risk of illness, DOH recommends choosing pasteurized milk and dairy products, particularly for people in high-risk groups. Raw milk and raw milk products sold in Pennsylvania are required by the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to be clearly labeled. Unintentional consumption of raw or unpasteurized milk or dairy products can be avoided by reading labels carefully.

DOH requests that health care providers maintain a high index of suspicion for salmonellosis or other enteric pathogens in patients presenting with clinically compatible symptoms, especially among children and/or families who report consuming raw or unpasteurized milk or milk products. Enteric testing should be ordered for these patients. For bacterial pathogens, including *Salmonella*, culture tests are preferred over culture independent diagnostic tests (CIDTS), such as PCR tests, in order to produce bacterial isolates, which are necessary for whole genome sequencing. Data generated through whole genome sequencing are the primary source of information used by public health to link cases to multistate outbreak investigations and potentially implicated products and, therefore, are essential for public health action. Under Pennsylvania State Law (28 Pa. Code § 27.2), isolates of or specimens positive for several enteric pathogens including *Salmonella*, Shiga toxin-producing *E. coli* (STEC), *Shigella*, and Shiga toxin are required to be submitted to the DOH Bureau of Laboratories (BOL) within five workdays of isolation or a positive test result.

For guidance on preparing isolates for shipping to BOL, please refer to the BOL's "Directory of Services" and "Specimen Submission Form" that via the Laboratories webpage here: <https://www.pa.gov/agencies/health/healthcare-and-public-health-professionals/laboratories>. All specimens or isolates sent to BOL must be properly labeled with patient name, patient date of birth, collection date, and collection time. This information should be included on the specimen submission slip and match the information on the specimen or isolate container. Isolates or specimens can be sent Monday through Thursday to:

PA Department of Health, Bureau of Laboratories
110 Pickering Way Exton, PA 19341
610-280-3464

If you have additional questions about this guidance, please contact DOH at 877-PAHEALTH (877-724-3258) or your local health department.

For more information

PA DOH Raw Milk Fact Sheet: [https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-](https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/health/documents/topics/documents/diseases-and-conditions/Raw%20Milk%20.pdf)

[pagov/en/health/documents/topics/documents/diseases-and-conditions/Raw%20Milk%20.pdf](https://www.pa.gov/content/dam/copapwp-pagov/en/health/documents/topics/documents/diseases-and-conditions/Raw%20Milk%20.pdf)

CDC Raw Milk Webpage: <https://www.cdc.gov/food-safety/foods/raw-milk.html>

FDA Raw Milk Misconception and the Danger of Raw Milk Consumption: <https://www.fda.gov/food/buy-store-serve-safe-food/raw-milk-misconceptions-and-danger-raw-milk-consumption>

References

Costard, S., Espejo, L., Groenendaal, H., & Zagmutt, F. J. (2017). Outbreak-related disease burden associated with consumption of unpasteurized cow's milk and cheese, United States, 2009–2014. *Emerging infectious diseases*, 23(6), 957.

Lind, L., Reeser, J., Stayman, K., Deasy, M., Moll, M., Weltman, A., ... & Chen, T. (2008). Salmonella Typhimurium Infection Associated With Raw Milk and Cheese Consumption--Pennsylvania, 2007. *JAMA: Journal of the American Medical Association*, 299(4).

Weinstein, E. (2025). Outbreak of Salmonella Typhimurium Infections Linked to Commercially Distributed Raw Milk—California and Four Other States, September 2023–March 2024. *MMWR. Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*, 74.

Williams, E. N., Van Doren, J. M., Leonard, C. L., & Datta, A. R. (2023). Prevalence of *Listeria monocytogenes*, *Salmonella* spp., Shiga toxin-producing *Escherichia coli*, and *Campylobacter* spp. in raw milk in the United States between 2000 and 2019: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Journal of food protection*, 86(2), 100014.

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

This information is current as of September 15, 2025 but may be modified in the future.
