

BOVINE TUBERCULOSIS FROM CONSUMING UNPASTEURIZED (RAW) MILK PRODUCTS (BOVINE TB)

***M. bovis* Tuberculosis – Patient Information**

What is bovine TB?

Bovine TB is a type of tuberculosis that can affect both humans and animals, such as cattle, deer, and pigs. In humans, bovine TB most often affects the lungs, lymph nodes or organs of the digestive system. It is a curable disease.

How can I catch bovine TB?

Bovine TB is transmitted from cattle to humans primarily by consumption of unpasteurized (raw) milk or raw milk products containing the bacteria. Children especially should not consume raw milk or raw milk products (like cheese) because they can develop a very serious illness. Symptoms may include productive cough, fever, chest pains, weight loss or stomach pain.

How do I know if a product is made from unpasteurized (raw) milk products?

A product that is unlabeled, or does not state that the product is pasteurized on the label may be made from unpasteurized (raw) dairy products. Do not eat these products. Only eat dairy products that are labeled "pasteurized."

- Some Mexican grocery stores and door-to-door vendors may sell unlabeled cheeses produced in Mexico that are not pasteurized.

Make sure that the following products - which may be transported from Mexico to Maryland via courier services or "paqueterias" - have food labels that say "pasteurized":

- Cotija
- Crema Mexicana
- Queso fresco
- Queso blanco

What happens if I'm infected with bovine TB?

The first step to determine if you've been exposed to bovine TB is to have a TB skin test. You can have a TB skin test at your local health department or at your private physician's office

Who should be tested for bovine TB?

The general public has a very small risk of coming into contact with bovine TB. We recommend that testing related to this bovine TB exposure be limited to individuals who may have consumed unpasteurized (raw) milk or milk products from infected cattle.

How can I avoid catching bovine TB?

Use only pasteurized milk and milk products.

What is the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) doing about bovine TB?

DHMH staff is currently assisting the local Health Departments to educate physicians about what questions to ask patients and what symptoms to look for, and also to provide information to people from Latin American communities on the risk of getting Bovine TB by consuming unpasteurized (raw) milk products.

Where can I get more information of tuberculosis?

Call the Maryland Tuberculosis Control Program at (410) 767-6698, or contact your local health department's Tuberculosis program.