The Truth About Raw Milk: Is It Safe? Transcript

(Transcripts are generated by AI and may contain errors)

Opening Anecdote on Health Decisions

I learned a lot, about. Not just. I didn't actually learn a lot of, like, content, like, use this supplement in the syndication kind of content. But I learned a lot about how people make decisions about their health.

I watched people choose a vitamin C based on the color of the label, or you know, based on how they felt the vibration of the vitamin C through the jar.

Like, this was just the most fascinating social experiment working there, watching people make decisions about their health and how infrequently they would use the like, hard data of like how many milligrams is in here?

How much does it cost? Those were very rarely part of the decision making. And there were people at that health food store that were just these lifers that worked there that you kind of just had they had these endearing in, you know, two ways about them.

Welcome to Doctor Talks, the podcast where every episode leads to a healthier you. Join us as we navigate the world of optimal health, uncovering groundbreaking strategies to conquer chronic disease.

In each episode, we'll bring you the latest insights from leading health experts, medical innovators, and wellness warriors. If you're seeking to transform your health journey, or if you're looking for answers to burning questions, you've come to the right place.

Get ready to unlock the secrets of lifelong health and vitality.

Podcast Intro and Raw Milk Topic

This is Doctor Talks, real talk from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most. All right, cheese fans, this one's going to be an interesting one.

They asked recently on my social media for people to give me a list of all of the, health claims that they see flying around the internet. And the reason I had to ask, truthfully, I feel a little bit out of touch.

I have really narrowed down who I'm willing to watch on social media. The list is basically like golden retrievers. Donkeys. My husband and I are pre contemplating donkeys for our hobby farm.

I see lots of weightlifting videos and that pretty much sums it up. And so I don't get a lot of the, you know, what's the the latest rage in the health and wellness space.

Very often in my own personal newsfeed, which may be that can be a good reminder for yourself. If you are getting inundated with stuff, maybe you need to, renegotiate who you spend time with online.

But I put out a call for things that people wanted us to debunk the myths on and got a huge list, actually. And so it's given us some awesome content to go through.

And although some of it I've tackled on social media and if you don't follow me on Instagram, it's, Doctor Jordan and D so Dr. Jordan and D on Instagram.

If you if you don't follow me, you should go over there and you can check out some of the shorter clips we've done on, on some of these segments. But I wanted to talk about this particular one in a longer episode, not because it's particularly a Canadian health concern, necessarily, because, the selling of raw milk is illegal in Canada.

But because it actually brings up some pretty decent conversation about how we make decisions in medicine, it also brings up a lot about conspiracy theory.

And you know, how we feel about government regulation, etc.. And so even though, you know, you may not be dying to try raw milk, and I hope you're not, because you might be dying if you do try raw milk.

That at least this gives you a little bit of a decision making construct when you see other, health claims like this online that are kind of flying in the face of government health regulations.

So like, government health regulations for some reason, always makes, people uncomfortable.

Why Government Health Rules Exist

You know, they don't regulate that many aspects of our health and well-being, but nutrition is one of them. You know, vaccines would be another one. There are moments where the government, you know, for the greater good, has stepped in and made some really strong, recommendations or strong rules, even about how things are managed at a population level.

And they do when we sort of peel back all of the layers of it, make sense for population health, right? It's really rare that actually, I'm pretty sure it's never that that governments like, you know what, let's put this rule in place.

And it is absolutely going to hurt more people than it helps. Right. Like the government is never doing that. That is not in anyone's interest. It's not in their interest for them to create rules that hurt more people than they help.

Now, I am absolutely the first person to say that sometimes things like standard of care guidelines don't meet every single individual's needs. Right.

There are there are moments where the care guidelines make sense at en masse. And then for you in your particular life, you may benefit from a slight tweaking of that standard of care guideline, right?

The way we deliver diabetes care, or the order in which we try and depressants for you as an individual, might need to be slightly different than what we would do en masse, but en masse.

If we follow the rules more people get better than not, right? But when it comes to government regulation, for some reason it always makes us a bit uncomfortable.

It's funny if they tried to like, regulate other parts of our healthcare life, like, would we be as equally as upset about it? Probably. Right? Like if they, like, stepped in and we're going to regulate our asleep or our exercise, even if they took all of the best available evidence and they were like, this is when you guys should go to bed, this is when you should exercise.

You know, we still would be mad about it, right? We'd be like, but my favorite show is on. After this guideline of when to go to bed, we would always have some kind of pushback.

We don't like being told what to do. And but when government is responsible for health on so many levels, you can see why it's in their interest to try and have information get disseminated at a really wide level to educate.

Right? What some of our greatest disparities in health come from baseline education. And so the government educates about health or sets some targets like things like food guidelines.

Because again, if everyone ate the public health food guidelines en masse, we would be healthier. They may not meet your particular personal needs, but the goal of them is to help more people than it hurts.

And they also have to take into consideration things like access and culture and so many things before they make these rules, though, I think we get really quick to jump in and say they're wrong or say that they're, you know,

they've got big industry and big pharma behind it when if we take a step back and think about like, what is that?

What is the purpose of public health? It's to raise the bar for the population en masse. Right? It's to let the people that have the least access and the least health.

If they followed those guidelines, they would have better health. Right. And so the purpose of them is that the purpose of them is not to ruin your life.

And it's not to hide a deep, dark, secret truth that is better than the guidelines from you. Right? That's not the purpose. But when we, you know, think about things like conspiracy theory, etc., it's really we really get, sold on this idea that there is a, a secret, better way of living out there.

And you for some reason, are not allowed to have access to it. And this is actually happened with this, this raw milk discussion that seems to be resurfaced.

This was something that's funny, like the internet is so scary.

Health Food Store Lessons and Conspiracy Thinking

So back when I was a student, I worked at a, health food store in Toronto, and it was pretty happy. I and in that time in my life I really loved it was super granola.

The culture in the store was lovely. I really enjoyed working there. I learned a lot, about not just I didn't actually learn a lot of, like, content, like use this supplement in the syndication kind of content.

But I learned a lot about how people make decisions about their health. I watched people choose a vitamin C based on the color of the label or, you know, based on how they felt the vibration of the vitamin C through the jar.

Like this was just the most fascinating social experiment working there, watching people make decisions about their health and how how infrequently they would use the like hard data of like how many milligrams is in here, how much does it cost?

Those were very rarely part of the decision making. And there were people at that health food store that were just these lifers that worked there that you kind of just had they had these endearing, you know, two ways about them.

But they had a lot of really, big conspiracy based ideas about health where they wouldn't touch certain paper in the office and they wouldn't go near the phone in the office.

And they were worried about a lot of, they were worried about big government actually stepping in. And ruining their, supplements, etc.. And I'm not saying that there isn't some level of government regulation that makes it harder for industry in Canada, especially.

I'm just saying that the extremism in thought was really, apparent at this, at this time for me when I was working in this health food store, however, the followers of these people, all who, in my opinion, were a little bit scary and maybe a little bit dangerous was were small, right?

They had this little community, these other people would come in who were like minded to them. They were kind of like their, disciples who listened to every word they said and took their latest juices that they thought were going to be beneficial.

But it was a small group of people right in their local community that they were leading, I guess, towards, I'll say, better health and, and, some serious air quotes, but better health.

Now those people have like a YouTube channel with like a million people, not those people specifically. I just mean, like that idea that that person who is afraid of the government, who thinks something's beneficial for you and

is going to share that with you without having the kind of, ability to logically look at it in the grand scheme of your health or the grand scheme of health and risk benefits.

So it's tough. Like, I feel like the internet is a big, scary place. So here we are with this, like, resurfaced, conversation about, about raw milk. So before we jump into that, and I'm not going to pretend to be a milk expert, I'm not a milk expert.

I've studied milk and the benefits of using dairy and milk therapeutically for, more than the decade around muscle mass around, looking at bone health, weight management, especially in perimenopause and menopause, it as a source of calcium, in the diet, it has a source of protein in the diet.

Insulin regulation. Like I spend a lot of time looking at the benefits of dairy based products in the diet for health and well-being. Zero of those studies use raw milk.

Let's just say that, okay, so all the things we think we know about molds that are positive, none of them have studied raw milk. But before we jump to that and like I said, I'm not going to pretend to be a milk expert, even though I know a lot about milk as a therapeutic food.

I want to start before we even get there. I'm thinking about like, how do you decide if you're going to do something for your health, right? How do you what's important to you before you decide that you're going to make a decision about health and the data that we collect on things to make decisions about them, really have this sort of like hierarchy.

We've either tested them in many, many, many people and many different kinds of people in many different scenarios. And we've observed a real benefit.

And by real I mean clinically meaningful. So we see the people do the thing and we can observe the change. The person knows they've changed, right. The patient knows that they're better, they score better, they do all the things better because they've used this particular intervention.

That's like best case scenario for us, right? We want to see real human, clinically relevant data. And when I talked about milk and all the things that I've studied milk for, that's where a lot of that literature lies.

Right. And blood sugar regulation and weight management and, bone loss.

How to Judge Health Evidence

Right. Like, these are real, observable, clinically meaningful things that we know if people include dairy in their diet, or whey protein in their diet, etc., they benefit from it.

When we come down from that, we get into the land of like chemical change, biological plausibility. And what that means is we may observe some changes, see, on like a molecular level, on a cellular level, maybe we notice enzymes change or hormones change or levels of things change in the body.

And we know those things to be good, but we don't know for sure if by giving them thing the milk in this case and changing those enzymes, that it always results in a positive clinical, meaningful outcome.

And sometimes we'll talk about things in integrative medicine. And we live in this space of biological plausibility. And we talk about it as if it is as weighty like as factual as the clinically meaningful outcomes.

Right. We'll say like this improves your microbiome. And who doesn't want an improved microbiome, right? I think we all want an improved microbiome. But what we can't always do is link an improved microbiome to better mood, to better bones, to more longevity.

Right. There is still a little bit of a gap, between us making that biological change, that sort of petri dish kind of

change and the clinically meaningful outcome that patients really want to have.

We'd still have a gap there or we see the levels improve, right? Maybe we lower a particular thing that we don't want in our body, or we increase our the levels of something in our body.

But again, we haven't been able to tie a perfect little bow between that change and a clinically meaningful outcome. But that's still a benefit, right?

And sometimes we operate in that space. Or maybe we don't totally know how something works, but it's doing some positive things in our body, digging antioxidants is kind of lives in this land, right?

If you can't afford them, you don't need to take them. If you can, they do improve your antioxidant status. But what we don't know is if you're going to live any longer, you get to decide if that's important to you or not.

Right? But those are kind of the realms of benefit that we're looking for biologically in humans, in organisms, either we have a clinically meaningful outcome or we have some kind of like biological improvement or biological plausibility.

On paper, this should help. That's kind of what we're shooting for in some regards. I had a really difficult postpartum experience, and I would never want another person to go through that.

I'd love to invite you to the thriving trimesters free online summit that I'm hosting with my favorite colleagues at the of Think Nation. This summit is intended for the public, so if you are in the family planning stage, if you're in a fertility journey, if you are in pregnancy trimester one, 2 or 3, or you are in the postpartum phase, this summit has something for everyone.

We're talking about mindset, nutrition, exercise, supplements, pelvic floor, how to recover from your birth and March I am so excited at this. Thrilled to showcase my colleagues who have absolutely the most evidence based strategies for supporting people in that perinatal period.

We want you to feel well-supported while you focus on taking care of your baby. You can register for the summit today. It starts February 24th and it's absolutely free to attend.

Use the link in the show notes for you to get access to enter your email. We also, sometimes in medicine are trying to avoid something bad from happening, right?

Like before I was saying let's do a thing and let's have something good happen. Sometimes we want to do something and avoid something bad from happening, right?

We're trying to avoid an outcome. We're trying to, reduce our personal risk. Right. Maybe we have a pre-established personal risk for something, and we're trying to lower that risk.

Or we're trying to avoid something bad from happening. And any time we are making a decision. Right. There's that, like, fork in the road, and you can go this way or you can go that way.

There is a cost and there is a benefit to to doing either of those things. Sometimes the cost is, small and the benefit is large. And so it feels very easy to make that decision.

Sometimes the cost is about as equal as the benefit. And when we get to the case of raw milk, the cost or potential cost is like way up here.

Raw Milk Risks vs. Theoretical Benefits

And the benefit is theoretical. Like you can't get much more delta than not, right? Like if we think of a different example, if we're going to use something, you know, sort of like quote unquote toxic, like cancer treatments, which

I'm hugely, hugely in favor of.

There is a cost and it's a really high cost. But we take that risk because there is a benefit in the case of this discussion around raw milk is you are maybe on paper, improving some marker your microbiome, or you're taking something that has the plausibility to help your health, but we don't have it documented anywhere that it actually does help your health.

And the cost is this is the number one cause of food borne illness in North America. And you're going to gamble with that in order to get this maybe benefit.

They like let that baby sink in for a second. Like we're not talking about, you know, medication that causes an immense benefit and a little bit of nausea.

Right? We're talking about no documented benefit. And number one, cause of foodborne illness. The huge it's a huge delta. So but you can see how and I'm weaving the conversation for us here.

Right. Government regulation trying to do the best for everyone. And at a population level this is really important. And then how we also get uncomfortable when there are rules.

And sometimes in integrative medicine, we like to put an awful lot of emphasis on things that look good on paper, but don't actually play out in real life.

And then we have the internet. And so the people that used to just talk in these small flocks in health food stores now have YouTube channels, right. You can see why this is kind of a problem. It so in Ontario or sorry in Canada raw milk was I'm going to say this in two different ways.

Raw milk was outlawed in 2019. Outlawed. Or if I say it in a different way, we learned that the preparation of dairy products in the absence of pasteurization was causing the majority of foodborne illness in Canada.

And so regulations came into it. Imp in place that made it mandatory for products to be sold to the public, that they had to go through pasteurization to reduce the risk of foodborne illness in these products that were sold en masse.

Like, that's where I'm saying the exact same thing, right? It's illegal. It's illegal at the say. It makes it sound like the government's clamped down on this.

What a killjoy. They took away our from the pasteurize it en masse. They're drinking it straight from the cow. So what do we do? We try and teach them to decrease the likelihood of them having foodborne illness and their milk, and then all of a sudden, like, that's like, quite noble literature.

And truthfully, the videos did not help. They had just as much foodborne illness from the training videos and following the training practices. Which brings us back to our North American raw milk discussion.

But we globally, we're having a huge conversation. And how privileged of us to be like, we're tired of not dying from our milk and we're mad at the government for regulating this.

And so we want to take that back. Now, can you imagine if those Ethiopian countries were given or, communities were given the opportunity to pasteurize their milk?

We would see this as the biggest, like feminist move ever, right? We would be supporting those women and supporting their health and helping improve their potential by pasteurized their milk.

And here we're like, don't you tell me what to do. Government like it's tiring, right? For medical professionals to have to even have this conversation in the first place.

But if we must, we have really great research that foodborne illness from milk products has gone down since

pasteurization became mandatory. There you go.

So why do people want to have, raw milk in the first place? Like the. And I tried like, I Google the crap out of this, trying to figure out, like, what on earth are they trying to stand on as far as, benefits?

And it's like, oh, the heating destroys all the goodness. So let me just back up and remind you that every single human clinical trial that uses dairy products uses pasteurized dairy.

100% of the goodness that we think we get from milk has only been studied in a pasteurized product. So how how do we know that all the goodness was destroyed?

Like, it sounds like there was a lot of goodness that was not destroyed by pass rising. And the goodness that we speak of in the raw milk community is biological plausibility only.

So there's immunoglobulins and like there's immune benefits, blah, blah, blah. You know what question I have? I want to know if these same people were telling you not to drink milk like five years ago, because my guess is they probably were dairy free five years ago, and now they have dairy, but only if it's raw.

So the goodness that they speak of is only biologically plausible that these immunoglobulins and things improve your microbiome and improve your immune system.

But in order to do that, you have to consume the food that is the single greatest source of foodborne illness in North America. Is that enough?

Why People Push Back on Guidelines

Is the maybe's maybe on paper benefit of the raw milk good enough for you that you're willing to risk eating the number one cause of food poisoning? Like I think about in the last couple of years when there's been a listeria outbreak in Aspen.

EJ, what have you done? Have you raced to your phone and been like, oh my God, is that in my state or province? Oh my God, is that the kind of spinach I bought?

Oh my god throw everything out just to be sure. Oh if you've thrown anything out because you were worried about foodborne illness. And then in the last couple of years, you're not even in the raw milk conversation.

Just stick with your pasteurized milk and you're fine. So. I think the reason I wanted to have this conversation is because even though it's maybe an extreme example, there are many examples like this in the health and wellness space where we bring in an idea and a concept that is not the currently recommended practice, right?

There's lots of diets that do this too, right? Like carnivore diet or whatnot. Extreme shame recommendation, the benefits, the benefits. I can't even say the benefits of the carnivore diet makes me want to throw up in the back of my mouth.

The benefits are maybe on paper, rapid lowering of blood sugar if we don't eat any carbs ever, right? Like rapid decrease in bloating if you never eat any fiber or food bulk, then I suppose it's on paper.

There's zero long term benefits and probably long term harm, but the way it gets positioned is like this is a secret that nobody wants you to know, right?

The government's trying to tell you to eat pears and you know they have a secret conspiracy against you eating fiber, that they want you to die younger.

I'm pretty sure that the government wants people to live longer, and be healthier. Right? It's in their interest too. So I'm hopeful that as we kind of talked through the sort of basis and pillars of, of this sort of argument, we'll call it that.

You can see for yourself when things start to get positioned where the benefit isn't real enough. We have a lot of data on how to help you, right? We have a lot of research on how to help you with your health.

It's not very often that we need to go down the rabbit hole of, does this improve this particular blood level or enzyme or what have you. We have so much information on what to do with you before we have to, grasp those kinds of evidence straws that, you know, if you're doing the 100% of the other healthy behaviors that are recommended for humans.

Sure. If you want to play around with something that may or may not improve levels, just don't do it. If it also carries a really well documented risk, right?

It's not like the raw milk risk increases. Hypothetical. It's real. It's a real actual risk. The benefits are the things that are abstract and that are on paper.

Maybe, but we don't have any documented evidence that it's helpful for you, but it really touches on this nerve of like, who gets to tell me what to do with my health?

You know, it's it's fine for us to be frustrated with government recommendations. Actually, a lot of the government recommendations are not accessible to the average person.

Right. Even this has been this is the latest, right. I'll say, criticism of the food guidelines is that most families can't afford to buy on it. Right?

If they were going to, whether it's a triangle right now or an oval or a rainbow, most families actually can't afford to eat the the Food Guide recommendations.

And so now we have this mismatch between what we know to be the healthiest and what is possible and accessible for a large percentage of the population, so we can get frustrated about the guidelines.

For that reason, we can also get relatively frustrated that when we do find some new information, it can take quite some time for that to weave its way into public health recommendations.

We also can be frustrated that your particular health concern may not be reflected in government regulations, right? If you have acne and your acne is worsened by dairy, the Carrot Food guide was not written for your acne.

It was written for population based statistics around mortality and the biggest, causes of death in the population. They weren't written for your skin.

So they're not wrong. It's that you need some individualization around it in order for it to meet your health goals. Right. Or the recommendation around, different sources of vegetables and carbohydrates may not meet your needs.

If you have IBS. Or if you have a particular goal that is, influencing the way that you, should eat and exercise, etc.

Closing Thoughts on Real Evidence

every day, that that's going to require some individualization. But the guidelines aren't wrong, right? They are not written for your iron man that you're doing.

They're written for the greatest good in the greatest number of people at a population level. So hopefully that conversation helps you understand, the raw milk thing at the very least, but also starts to like look through, you know, messaging on integrative medicine and some of these like real conspiracy based, recommendations that are made and how we poopoo on government guidelines.

When I wish everybody followed the guidelines like that. What actually, as a as a whole, we would be so much

healthier if every person in our nation was able to follow the guidelines, like the sky would be the limit for us as a society if everyone could follow the guidelines.

If the guidelines don't meet your individual needs, that's where you need some support from someone who actually knows a thing or two about nutrition.

And isn't pushing some kind of wacky personal agenda on, the discussion with you, like the raw milk? People seem to be willing to do. All right, well, thanks for spending time, with me today.

I look forward to seeing you again next week when we tackle more conversations in real integrative medicine. And it's funny because when I every time I see that word real, I think, about all the different potential interpretations of the title of our podcast and which I did on purpose.

Right. I think that that's a really like what is real, right? Like, it sounds so real when we see someone with a million followers drink milk right from the cow like that, it looks real.

But what we want and what I want for you is to be able to see the difference between real health news, real change that you can make in your own life and the life of the people that you love and be able to see fact from fiction when it comes to health and wellness, science and evidence.

Because integrative medicine is a really beautiful thing, but not when it gets bastardized by these micro colonies of people that are pushing against these particular agendas that are not rooted in any kind of evidence.

So I look forward to spending every week with you, and I will I will see you next time. Thank you for tuning in to Doctor Talks. We hope today's episode has enlightened and inspired you on your path to optimal health.

Each day is a new opportunity to make choices that empower your well-being. For more insights and strategies, subscribe to our podcast and visit our website.

W ww di doctor talks.com. Stay connected, stay healthy and join us next time on Doctor Talks. Real talks from real doctors on the issues that matter to you most.