

COWS, ILLNESS, AND ANTIBIOTICS: MAKING SURE YOUR MILK IS SAFE

Cows get the sniffles too. That's where antibiotics come in. A medicine that helps combat unwanted microorganisms, antibiotics (like penicillin) are prescribed by veterinarians to help our mooing friends heal safely and effectively.¹ This medication doesn't mean your milk will be any different either. There are strict government standards and protocols that ensure there isn't a single drop of antibiotics in the milk you buy at the store. Here's what that multistep process looks like.

STEP 1: FOLLOW THE DOCTOR'S ORDERS

When a cow gets sick:



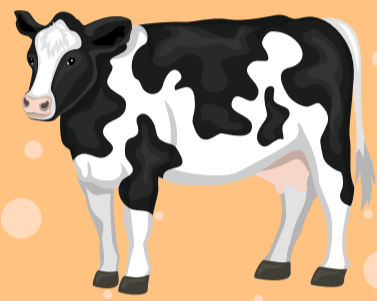
She goes to the veterinarian



Gets prescribed antibiotics, only if needed

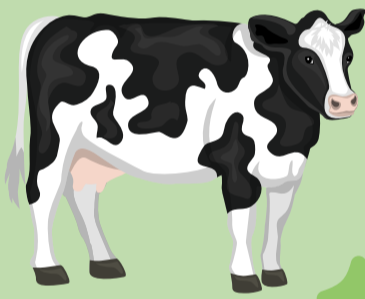


Takes the antibiotics like the veterinarian said (with her farmer's help)



STEP 2: ISOLATE UNTIL CLEAN

While the cow heals:



She stays isolated in a special area



Has her milk discarded until the antibiotics are out of her system

STEP 3: TEST THE MILK

Before the milk hits the shelf:

The full milk pickup is sampled and tested—twice (at the farm and at the milk plant)

POSITIVE TEST:



The entire tanker of milk is discarded



There are further examinations to find the source

NEGATIVE TEST:



The milk is antibiotic-free



The milk ends up at the store



Sound simple? It is. It's also effective: In 2021, nearly four million samples of milk and milk products were collected and less than 0.02% tested positive for drug residue. So, you can feel safe that our milk regulatory process is working.¹



¹ Farmers Assuring Responsible Management. "Milk & Dairy Beef Drug Residue Prevention Reference Manual 2022-2023." Published 2022. Accessed 12.8.2022.