

# HEALTH ALERT!

## Unpasteurized Cheese: What You Should Know

(NAPSA)—While cheese is an excellent source of calcium and protein—two things that pregnant women need as they nourish their unborn children—knowing which cheeses are safe can literally be a matter of life and death.

That's because cheeses made from raw or unpasteurized milk can contain bacteria that might make a baby sick before he or she is born, even if the mother feels no ill effects. Pasteurization is a process that heats the milk to kill off bacteria, including those that cause listeriosis.

Listeriosis is a dangerous disease that can cause birth defects and other serious problems—even the death of an unborn child. Symptoms can include fever, chills, muscle aches, upset stomach, nausea and/or diarrhea; there may be no symptoms at all.

Here's what pregnant women should know:

- Queso Fresco is a Mexican-style soft cheese that is sometimes made with unpasteurized milk. Many types of cheeses can be made Queso Fresco style, including Queso Fresco, Panela, Asadero and Queso Blanco.

- Unpasteurized cheeses are often sold door to door, at flea markets or from the back of trucks, or are brought into the U.S. from Mexico and Central America.

- Before eating any of these soft Mexican-style cheeses, read the label to make sure it says "Made from Pasteurized Milk" or "Pasteurized." If it doesn't, do not eat the cheese.



**Soft, Mexican-style cheeses may be made from unpasteurized milk and could contain bacteria that can harm an unborn child.**

- If you think you may have eaten contaminated cheese while pregnant, call your doctor or clinic right away. A doctor may prescribe antibiotics that are safe to take during pregnancy.

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has information in both English and Spanish on the subject of Queso Fresco and pregnancy. To learn more, visit <http://www.cfsan.fda.gov/~dms/lm-p-toc.html>.