

Exposing the fallacy of the claim: “Cow’s milk is a deadly poison.”

Praise be to Allāh, Lord of the worlds, and may peace and blessings be upon the Messenger of Allāh, Muḥammad. To proceed:

Some individuals associated with contemporary medicine have dared to claim that cow’s milk is a deadly poison, God forbid. Millions of people listen to them, so it has become necessary to clarify the falsity of their statements, both religiously and medically.

I say: the Ummah has been afflicted with many such people who associate themselves with modern medicine and claim to be informed researchers, while in reality they are ignorant. They contradict the Shariah and blindly follow whatever Westerners say, without principles or restraint—so much so that if they were to enter a lizard’s hole, they would follow them into it.

Had they learned the Shariah and humoral medicine, they would not have fallen into such a low level of flawed understanding.

These ignorant people say:

“Cow’s milk is a deadly poison because it contains a protein called casein, which increases inflammation in the body, feeds cancer cells if they exist, and delays digestion. There is also lactose, which causes lactose intolerance. Most people, after the age of two, stop drinking milk because the enzyme decreases and no longer works, so after two years there is no digestion of lactose. That is why you find lactose-free milk.”

This is the end of their ignorant statement.

Cow’s milk is not a poison

Allāh the Exalted says about milk what it means:

{Pure milk, pleasant to those who drink it}

That is, wholesome, delicious, and with a good outcome, flowing easily down the throat.

I say: this is an absolute statement.

Cow's milk is not only for children; rather, it benefits many people, with conditions and guidelines that the ancient physicians clearly stated.

Imam Aḥmad narrated in his Musnad that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said what it means:

“Whoever Allāh feeds with food, let him say: O Allāh, bless it for us and feed us better than it. And whoever Allāh gives milk to drink, let him say: O Allāh, bless it for us and increase us from it, for there is nothing that suffices in place of both food and drink except milk.”

Al-Hafiz Ibn Hibban also narrated in his Ṣaḥīḥ that the Messenger of Allāh ﷺ said what it means:

“Allāh has not sent down a disease except that He sent down for it a cure, so drink the milk of cows, for they graze from every plant.”

I say: milk is blessed because the Prophet ﷺ encouraged drinking it and said what it means, “increase us from it.” How, then, could it be a poison?

The words of Allāh and His Messenger are sufficient for submission, but the need arose for a medical refutation of these ignorant people so that those who hear them are not deceived and led astray.

Let Muslims know that we have humoral medicine by which we evaluate all medical matters—a medicine approved by the scholars of Islam and considered a communal obligation (farḍ kifāyah).

I say: even if cows do not eat natural pasture, but are fed barley, wheat bran, cottonseed residues, corn, wheat, sugar beet pulp, alfalfa, dried beans, catfish meal, or straw, or if vitamins are added to strengthen the feed—none of this is toxic. However, the best cows are those with good water and air, and whose feed is wholesome pasture; then the milk produced is good and nourishing.

But if cows eat purgative plants such as scammony or hellebore, their milk then becomes laxative, harming the stomach and intestines.

If they eat astringent plants like acorns, the milk becomes constipating.

Milk from a sick animal should be avoided. Spring milk is more watery than summer milk, and milk from animals grazing on tender plants is more softening than milk from animals grazing on dry plants.

Good milk is moderately thick; when dropped on a fingernail it gathers and does not spread.

The temperament of cow's milk

Milk at the time of milking is hot and wet.

Its hotness is in the middle of the first degree, and its wetness at the beginning of the second degree.

Afterward, it becomes cold and wet.

Sour, skimmed milk is cold and dry.

Conditions of natural milk

Sound, natural milk is clear and pure, free of turbidity, sourness, sharpness, or salinity, with slight sweetness and a non-offensive smell. Milk can be adjusted to suit all temperaments and seasons. The most subtle and beneficial form is when it is used immediately after milking, due to its gentle hotness, which disappears when it cools. If it sits for a long time, it should not be used unless reheated—especially if it was exposed to hot air, which alters its qualities and leads it toward internal and external corruption.

What humoral physicians say about the composition of milk

Humoral physicians state that milk is composed of watery, curdled (caseous), and buttery components, each with its own temperament.

The watery component is naturally cold and wet, but it acquires hotness from the bilious part of the blood, making it gentle, cleansing, and polishing without irritation.

The curdled component is cold and dry.

The buttery component is balanced, inclining toward hotness and wetness.

Types of milk and their effects according to ancient medicine

- The watery part hottens and refines the humors and loosens the bowels.
- The curdled part constipates, produces thick humors, obstructions, and stones.
- The buttery part is like fresh oil.

When these substances separate, each has a specific action as food or medicine.

Casein, according to ancient physicians, is the curd that remains after churning and souring once the fat is removed. Its harm outweighs its benefit. But as long as it remains mixed with milk and the milk has not soured, it is not harmful to one whose temperament suits it.

The watery component alone: benefits and harms

The watery part alone is beneficial if it is not mixed with salt and has not been kept for more than a day. It benefits hot itch and scabies, obstructions of the spleen and liver, increases urination, produces gas, and may cause poor digestion. Anise corrects its harm.

Milk with a dominant watery component is less harmful and easier to digest. Habitual use wettens the temperament.

Milk with a dominant curdled component is harmful, causing liver and spleen obstructions and stones in the kidneys and bladder, and should not be consumed in excess.

When milk is harmful

Whoever has a cold stomach in which milk curdles should avoid it completely, as it is very harmful to them.

Etiquette of drinking milk and its effect on the body

A person whose body is wet should take milk with garlic, leeks, mint, mustard, black seed, oil, and honey.

Benefits of milk according to ancient physicians

Milk:

- Strengthens the body
- Cleanses internal ulcers with honey
- Increases brain matter and semen
- Stimulates sexual desire due to vascular inflation

- Is easy to digest
- Benefits hot, dry temperaments if there is no bile in the stomach
- Preserves the body's innate wetness, prolonging life by Allah's permission
- Removes fatigue
- Benefits those weakened by excessive intercourse
- Benefits jaundice
- Is an antidote to poisons
- Clears the voice
- Increases a woman's milk
- Quenches thirst
- Promotes urination
- Treats forgetfulness, grief, and obsessive thoughts

Its harm to some temperaments

It harms phlegmatic individuals, whose hotness is insufficient to digest it, increasing phlegm and raw wetness.

If the elderly wish to drink it for wettening, they should aid its digestion with honey.

It harms those with wet palpitations, whether sanguine or phlegmatic.

Summary in nutrition

Milk provides sufficient nourishment and produces soft, wet flesh.

Guidelines for drinking milk and when it harms hot-natured people

Children drink it until the appearance of pubic hair, then they should stop—especially those with hot temperaments, as it curdles in their stomachs, causes anxiety, bloating, heaviness in the head, and harms those with obstructions or weak vision.

Whoever does not experience souring in the stomach may drink it. It harms eyesight only when poorly digested, for when the stomach is harmed, the head shares in it.

When drinking milk, all other foods and drinks should be avoided until it passes downward. If mixed with other foods, even in small amounts, it spoils and spoils the milk with it.

It should be taken in the morning, without exertion afterward, and rest is best so that it descends properly.

Conclusion

Cow's milk benefits all ages when properly adjusted to each temperament:

- The sanguine adds rose
- The phlegmatic adds honey
- The yellow bile-dominant adds rose water
- The black bile-dominant adds cane sugar

The claim that it is harmful or toxic is false. It may harm:

- A phlegmatic person who drinks it daily
- A yellow bile-dominant person whose stomach turns it into bile

Because of these cases, some modern physicians wrongly assumed it is harmful in general and that lactose intolerance affects most people. This is incorrect; lactose sensitivity mainly affects phlegmatic individuals, who are not the majority.

Even these people can drink it safely by adding a little honey, as honey is hot and dry while milk is cold and wet, preventing phlegm formation and aiding digestion.

Refutation of the casein claim

Their claim about casein being harmful is also false. As long as milk has not soured, there is no harm from it. When milk sours, it is usually harmful—this is clear and undisputed.

Warning

Beware of listening to these ignorant people who blindly follow their teachers in Europe and America, repeating what they learned without verification, relying on studies conducted on people with cold, wet temperaments and generalizing the results. This applies only to phlegmatic individuals.

Because of their ignorance of humoral medicine, they erred, perished, and caused others to perish.

We ask Allāh for safety in our religion and our worldly life.