



Safe Handling Tips for Pet Foods and Treats

We love our pets, and some simple steps will help prevent foodborne illness, including *Salmonella* -related illness, when handling pet foods and treats. These products, like many other types of foods, can be susceptible to harmful bacterial contamination.

Salmonella in pet foods and treats can cause serious infections in **dogs and cats**, and in **people** too, especially children, older people, and those with compromised immune systems. *Salmonella* in pet foods and treats can be transferred to people ingesting or handling the contaminated products. Or people can become sick if, after caring for a sick animal, or handling their waste, they don't wash their hands properly.

Pet owners and consumers can help reduce the likelihood of infection from contaminated pet foods and treats by following safe handling instructions:

Buying

- Purchase products in good condition, without signs of damage to the packaging such as dents or tears.

Preparation

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with hot water and soap before and after handling pet foods and treats, and after playing with pets or handling their waste.
- Wash pet food bowls, dishes, and scooping utensils with soap and hot water after each use.
- Do not use the pet's feeding bowl as a scooping utensil—use a clean, dedicated scoop or spoon.
- Dispose of old or spoiled pet food products in a safe manner, such as in a securely tied plastic bag in a covered trash receptacle.

Storage

- Refrigerate promptly or discard any unused, leftover wet pet food. Refrigerators should be set at 40° F or below.
- Dry products should be stored in a cool, dry place—under 80° F.
- If possible, store dry pet food in its original bag inside a clean, dedicated plastic container with a lid, keeping the top of the bag folded closed.
- Keep pets away from food storage and preparation areas.
- Keep pets away from garbage and household trash.

Raw Food Diets

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the agency which regulates pet food, does not advocate a raw meat, poultry, or seafood diet for pets due to increased risk of illness that these diets present to the health of the animal and their owner. If a pet owner chooses a raw food diet for their animal, the FDA recommends the following precautions:

- Keep raw meat and poultry products frozen until ready to use.
- Thaw raw meat items in the refrigerator or microwave oven.

- Keep raw food diets separate from other foods. Wash working surfaces, utensils (including cutting boards, preparation and feeding bowls), hands, and any other items that touch or contact raw meat, poultry, or seafood with hot soapy water. [This includes floor areas where animals may place or drop food.]
- Immediately cover and refrigerate any raw meats leftover from a feeding. Discard any raw meats left out for more than 2 hours.
- Sanitize cutting boards, counter tops and floor feeding areas as follows: wash the area with soap and warm water. Rinse with clear water and then spray with a dilute bleach solution (1 teaspoon of bleach in a quart of water). Allow the sprayed area to air dry for at least 3 minutes. There is no need to wipe or rinse the sprayed surface.

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