



Consumers can take steps to 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.



Safe Handling Tips for Dry and Raw Pet Foods



Additional Resources

Nebraska Department of Agriculture
www.nda.nebraska.gov
402-471-2351

Food & Drug Administration
www.fda.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
www.cdc.gov

Buying Pet Food

- 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.
- 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 a securely tied plastic bag in a covered trash receptacle.



Storage

- Refrigerate promptly or discard any unused, leftover wet pet food.
- Refrigeration of pet food should be followed according to the label on the product. It is always in the best interest of the consumer to follow the product label handling instructions, 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 Pet Food

- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling raw pet food, and after touching surfaces or objects that have come in contact with the raw food.
- Potential contaminated surfaces include: countertops and the inside of refrigerators and microwaves.
- Potential contaminated objects include: kitchen utensils, feeding bowls, and cutting boards. Thoroughly clean and disinfect all surfaces and objects that come in contact with raw pet food.
- First wash with hot soapy water and then follow with a disinfectant.
- A solution of 1 tablespoon bleach to 1 quart (4 cups) water is an effective disinfectant.
- For a larger supply of the disinfectant solution, add ¼ cup bleach to 1 gallon (16 cups) water.
- You can also run items through the dishwasher after each use to clean and disinfect them.

Storage of Raw Pet Food

- Freeze raw meat and poultry products until you are ready to use them. Thaw them in your refrigerator or microwave, not on your countertop or in your sink.
- Carefully handle raw and frozen meat and poultry products.
- Do not rinse raw meat, poultry, fish, and seafood.
- Bacteria in the raw juices can splash and spread to other food and surfaces.
- Keep raw food separate from other food.
- Immediately cover and refrigerate what your pet does not eat, or throw the leftovers out safely.



Pet Interaction

- Do not kiss your pet around its mouth, and don't let your pet lick your face.
- This is especially important after your pet has just finished eating raw food.
- Thoroughly wash your hands after touching or being licked by your pet.
- No matter what type of pet food you feed your pet, you should always follow these safe handling tips.

