



LURKING BACTERIA

WATER & FOOD SAFETY

Have you ever noticed a layer of slime in your pet's water bowl? That's not drool, that's bacteria that has bound together. The bacteria from an animal's mouth can be transferred to the bowls while eating or drinking, and the bowls are a good environment for the bacteria to multiply. The bacteria left in a pet's water or food bowl can not only make them sick, it could also cause illness in the human who handles their bowls.

PREVENTING ILLNESS

- Wash food and water bowls daily in warm, soapy water. At least once a week, put them in the dishwasher to fully sterilize them. Be sure to have a designated washcloth or sponge that you use on your pet's dishes that is separate from the one you use for human dishes.
- Never use your pet's food bowl to scoop out their food. Instead, use a scoop so that you're not contaminating their food with any bacteria from their bowl.
- Wash your hands before and after you handle your pet's food or bowls.

Experts recommend using stainless steel bowls. Plastic is more likely to get scratched, which can make it easier for bacteria to develop. Glass and ceramic bowls can also be good options, but make sure you double check for cracks or chips and that the glaze used on the bowl is certified for food use.

FOOD STORAGE SAFETY

All food should be stored in a closed container, and wet food should be stored in the refrigerator once it has been opened. While plastic storage bins are the most popular choice for dry food, be sure your container is BPA-free. Stainless steel is also a great option for storage bins since they are durable and easy to clean. It is recommended that you wash and dry storage containers before refilling them with any new food.

By keeping bowls clean and storing food safely, your pet will be much less likely to get sick! For more tips visit vbspca.com/pet-care-resources.

