



TOPLINES

MAY/JUNE 2025

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How Often Should I Wash My Dog's Bowl?

By Nandini Maharaj

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When you've finished eating a bowl of cereal or instant noodles, you might scrub your dishes by hand or stick them in the dishwasher. For many reasons, and the possibility of getting sick, you probably wouldn't put dirty dishes back in the cupboard or reuse your cereal-encrusted bowl the next morning. But can you say the same for your dog's food and water bowl?

Maybe you refill their water dish a few times before washing it. Or perhaps you add a fresh scoop of kibble to the bowl your dog licked clean earlier in the day. Even if your dog's bowl doesn't look dirty, improper handling of pet food and poor hygiene practices can result in contamination, putting you and your dog at risk for infection.

Below we share advice from veterinarians on how often to wash your dog's bowls, what types of dog bowls to use, and what to know about sharing food and water bowls if you have a multi-pet household.

When and Why Should You Wash Your Dog's Bowl?

"Dogs aren't the tidiest eaters," says Dr. Kelly Hood, DVM, in-house veterinary expert at Pet Portraits. "They drool, slobber food around, and their mouths are full of bacteria that when mixed with food particles and moisture, can create the perfect environment for harmful microorganisms to thrive." Moreover, if you practice free-feeding, meaning leaving food out for dogs at all times, you're less likely to wash their bowl

When bacteria adhere to wet surfaces like your dog's bowl, they produce a slimy substance called biofilm, according to an article in the journal *Frontiers in Cellular and Infection Microbiology*. The buildup of plaque on your teeth and soap scum in your drains are examples of biofilm, which is made up of a community of microorganisms including bacteria and yeast, as well as debris. The main reason to wash your dog's bowl is to break up this bacterial biofilm that can lead to illness.

Ideally, you should wash your dog's food and water bowls daily to avoid the accumulation of food residue and biofilm, which can be detrimental to the health of your pets and the rest of your family, says Dr. Jamie Whittenburg, DVM, director of Kingsgate



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Miniature Schnauzer Club of Michigan Meeting

Saturday, June 7, 2025

At

ANN ARBOR DOG TRAINING CLUB

1575 E North Territorial Rd

Whitmore Lake, MI 48189

1 p.m.

In Room 1

Potluck, Meeting

Tricks & Conditioning exercises for dogs.

Bring lots of small soft treats for your dog.

DOGS ARE WELCOME. BRING YOUR OWN CHAIR.

Please RSVP Beth by email at bsanture@gmail.com or the google group to let her know if you are planning to attend and what dish you are bringing. Thank you!



Animal Hospital in Lubbock, TX. Her advice is to have two sets of bowls, so you can wash them in the dishwasher and always have a clean set. She also emphasizes the importance of providing your dog with fresh, clean drinking water.

Given the risk of infection from bacteria like salmonella and listeriosis, it's best to wash your dog's bowl after each meal with hot soapy water. "It might seem like a lot, but it's just like how we wouldn't use the same unwashed plate day after day," Dr. Hood says.

What Happens If You Don't Wash Your Dog's Bowl?

Food residue on your dog's bowl can attract insects and other pests. In addition, bacteria such as *E. coli* and salmonella may begin to grow and reproduce, creating a foul odor and leading to food poisoning. "These bacteria pose a serious risk to the health of pets and humans alike," Dr. Whittenburg says.

The National Sanitation Foundation reported that pet bowls are the fourth-germiest place in the home after dish sponges, kitchen sinks, and toothbrush holders. Another study of 351 dog caregivers and 186 cat caregivers found higher bacterial counts in pet bowls containing wet food compared to dry food. There were also higher levels of bacterial contamination when people washed bowls by hand compared to using the dishwasher.

Depending on the level of bacteria present, your dog may experience minor stomach problems or skin issues. "In more serious cases, there might be potential infections that could make your dog very sick," Dr. Hood says. "Sometimes chronic diarrhea can be cleared up just by implementing a regular bowl washing routine."

If you hand wash your dog's bowl, you may want to disinfect the bowl once a week using bleach diluted with water. Let the bowls soak for 10 minutes and rinse thoroughly. If you're using the dishwasher, make sure the bowl is dishwasher-safe and use a high heat setting to kill bacteria. As long as your dog is healthy, and you wash their bowls regularly, you can wash dog bowls in the same load as your dishes.

How Do You Practice Good Bowl Hygiene?

The US Food and Drug Administration has specific guidelines on handling pet food. However, as reported in a study of 417 dog owners, fewer than 5% of dog owners were aware of these guidelines. Moreover, 36% of those surveyed had children or other immunocompromised individuals residing with them.

To keep your dog safe, the FDA recommends the following practices:

- Wash your hands before and after handling your dog's food and treats for at least 20 seconds using soap and hot water

Wash your dog's food bowls and scooping utensils with soap and hot water after each use

- Use a clean spoon or cup to measure your dog's food rather than using your dog's bowl
- Dispose of spoiled or expired food in a secure plastic bag and garbage bin

If food particles are stuck to the bowl, try soaking it in hot soapy water for 10 to 15 minutes. For extra cleaning power,

When purchasing a bowl, both experts recommend choosing stainless steel for your dog's food and water bowl. This material is "basically indestructible, dishwasher-safe, and doesn't hang onto odors and bacteria like plastic does due to its non-porous material," Dr. Hood explains. In addition to being easier to clean, stainless steel bowls tend to "cause fewer allergic issues, especially in cats," Dr. Whittenburg says.

For a more aesthetically pleasing look, you may wish to purchase a non-toxic and high-quality ceramic bowl as an alternative to stainless steel. However, ceramic bowls tend to be heavier and aren't always dishwasher safe. Since they can be damaged if dropped, "keep an eye out for chips and cracks in these bowls, because bacteria can hide in the fis-

Club News:



2025 Calendar of Events

June 7 (Saturday)- 1 p.m. @ Ann Arbor Dog Training Club, 1575 E North Territorial Rd, Whitmore Lake, MI 48189 Dogs Welcome.

July 25,26,27-MSCM Agility Trials @ All Dogs Can, 2040 N. Lapeer Road, Lapeer, MI 48446

August 20 (Wednesday)-Evening Zoom Meeting

September 26 (Friday)-MSCM Specialty, Monroe County Fairgrounds, Monroe, MI

October 12 (Sunday)-Valiant Bar & Grill, 1120 S. Main Street, Chelsea, MI 48118

December 6 (Saturday)-Coral Gables Restaurant, 2838 E Grand River Ave, East Lansing, MI 48823

MSCM Agility Trials

Friday, Saturday, Sunday

July 25,26,27 2025

*All Dogs Can LLC
2232 North Lapeer Road
Lapeer, MI 48446*

AGILITY TRIAL RAFFLE- Members should bring raffle donation items to the June meeting. These items will be used to prepare our annual raffle/auction at the July agility trial.

Already prepared baskets are desired, but not necessary. Individual items are also welcome. Items should be new or "like new" and in clean, good condition. Gift cards are great too! Contact JoAnne Scott with any questions, ja.scott@comcast.net

There will be lunch/water for workers. Contact Lynn Baitinger at otchmx@gmail.com if you are able to volunteer for Agility. There are many types of jobs that need to be filled, such as bar setter, timer, scribe, gate steward and course builders.

BRAGS

Jacqueminot Journey to Mauneau won Winnners Bitch/Best of Winners for a 5 point major at the Greater Columbus Miniature Schnauzer Club Specialty. Owned by Marcia Coffman & Cheryl Coffman. Bred by Cheryl Coffman.

GCH Loneacre Come And Take It "Pistol" won 2 Best of Breeds, Best of Opposite, 2 Select Dog, two Group 3s, Owner Handled Reserve Best in Show and Owner Handled Best in Show at the Columbus shows. Owned & bred by Beth Santure.

NEW CHAMPION-Sercatep's Annie Get UR Gun "Annie" completed her title at the Crown Point, IN shows. Owned by Debbie Herrell. Bred by Debbie Herrell & Karla Hench.

NEW CHAMPION-Loneacre Life of the Party by Tomar STR "Diva" completed her title at the Marietta, OH shows. Owned by Sue Quinn & Beth Santure. Bred by Mary Paisley.

GCH Loneacre's Pint of Guinness SWA, TKN "Dublin" earned his Advanced Scent Work Title at the Progressive shows. Owned by Sue Quinn & Beth Santure. Bred by Beth Santure & Kate McMillan.

Donnella's Faire Tartan Gal "Teghan" won Best of Winners and Bred By Group 2 at the Ravenna KC show. Owned by Donna Klaus. Bred by Donna Klaus.

Loneacre's Hellcat "Kit" earned her AX Title in Agility, and her Senior Title in Barn Hunt. Owned by Lynn Baitinger & Beth Santure. Bred by Beth Santure.

SHOW CALENDAR

2025

July 4-6
Breed,Obed,Rally
AAKC & TCM
Monroe, MI

July 10-13 Breed
Sturgis/Berrien KC
Marshall, MI

July 12-13 Rally
OTCGL
Lansing, MI

July 18-20 Obed & Rally
Shetland Sheepdog Club
Flint, MI

July 25-27 Obed & Rally
Kalamazoo Kennel Club
Kalamazoo, MI

Aug 8-10 Obed & Rally
Obed Club of Gtr Lansing
Lansing, MI

Aug. 16-17 Obed & Rally
St. Joe Valley Agility Club
Buchanan, MI

Aug. 29 –31
Breed,Obed,Rally
Marquette KC
Marquette, MI

Agility

July 3-6
Various clubs
Midland, MI

July 11-13
AADTC
Whitmore Lake, MI

July 17-20
Southern MI Weim
Club
Lapeer, MI

July 25-27
MSCM
Lapeer, MI

July 31-Aug. 3
Capital City Club
Whitmore Lake, MI

Aug. 7-10
Various clubs
Midland, MI

Aug. 15-17
Rhodesian Club
Whitmore Lake, MI

Aug. 22-24
CDTC
Lapeer, MI

Aug. 28-31
Various clubs
Midland, MI

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tures,” Dr. Hood adds.

Is It Safe for Pets to Share Water or Food Bowls?

“Pets in a home may share bowls, but care must be taken to provide enough bowls, especially for water so that each pet has adequate access,” Dr. Whittenburg says. Although it’s possible to transmit illness between pets via food or water bowls, “in most houses, the risk is higher from the pets being in direct contact with each other,” she adds. Accordingly, all pets need to be healthy when sharing bowls.

In terms of food bowls, it’s preferable to use separate bowls since your pets may be on different diets or feeding schedules. Sharing food bowls poses a risk of spreading illness, but it’s also “a recipe for feeding time drama,” Dr.

Another reason for using separate bowls is when you’re introducing a new pet to the household. “This situation may require quarantining of the new pet in their own area for a length of time,” Dr. Whittenburg says. She recommends speaking to your veterinarian about quarantining new pets.

Part of being a responsible dog owner is making sure your dog has access to fresh drinking water along with serving them a nutritionally balanced and complete diet. Good food-handling practices can go a long way toward promoting the health of your pets and yourself. If you haven’t been keeping your dog’s bowls in tip-top shape, now is a good time