

QUICK FACTS: PETS ARE LIKE FAMILY TOO

Just like us, pets are at risk of food poisoning.

Statistically speaking, we don't have an accurate idea as to how many pets get sick from contaminated pet food each year. However, the American Veterinary Medical Association (AVMA) has estimated that of the approximately 70M dogs and 74M cats in the US, 11M+ dogs and 12M+ cats get sick every year from a food-related illness.

If you're a pet owner, you probably treat your furry friend like a family member. Here are some good ideas to help you keep your pet from facing a foodborne illness.

Good Idea for minimizing risk:

- Wash your hands for 20 seconds with soap and water before and after touching pet food.
- Clean food and water dishes after each feeding.
- Use a clean scoop to transfer food out of bags and containers to dishes.
- Throw away spoiled or old pet food. Tie the plastic bag so it's more difficult to get into.

Good Idea for staying informed:

- Sign up to receive pet food recall emails from the AVMA here: <http://bit.ly/petfoodrecalls>
- If your pet's food is recalled, take quick action to discard all of it, from your supply and from your pet's food bowls.
- If your pet is already sick, you may want to keep some of the tainted food for possible testing later. Handle it with care by washing your hands before and after, and by clearly labeling what it is. Discard the rest.
- Report a pet food complaint to the FDA here: <https://www.safetyreporting.hhs.gov/> Have as much information on hand as possible.

Symptoms To Watch For

When a dog or cat (or other pet) falls ill with a foodborne illness, they usually have these symptoms:

- Diarrhea (including blood or mucus)
- Vomiting
- Lethargy
- Dehydration

Sometimes, though, pets are carriers without showing symptoms. They shed the pathogen in their stools or harbor it in their saliva or on their fur. That's why it's important to remember that you and your family, especially children, can become sick from tainted pet food, too. Humans are at risk when they handle contaminated pet food or have contact with an infected animal.

Good Idea for protecting yourself:

The best protection is diligent, thorough hand washing after petting and touching pets, serving or handling pet food, or any contact with pet waste. Because children 5 and under are especially susceptible to foodborne illness, they should be kept away from feeding areas at all times. And, don't let them touch or eat pet food.

See **Quick Facts: Wash Your Hands**

For symptoms of foodborne illness in humans:

www.stopfoodborneillness.org/awareness/to-do-if-youre-sick/

If Your Pet is Sick

If you suspect you have food poisoning, seek immediate medical attention.

If your cat or dog is showing symptoms of a foodborne illness, call your vet right away for immediate examination and treatment.

