

## Think Food – Think Pet Food and Feeding!

You may think of your dogs or cats as family members, but do you handle their food and feeding utensils the same way you handle your own? You should! You wouldn't eat off the same plate or drink out of the same glass, day after day, without washing them between meals. So it stands to reason you shouldn't neglect to wash your pet's food bowls between meals every day and the water bowl every day or two.

Dogs and cats (just like people) have bacterial microbes in their mouths and these microbes can be transferred to dishes the pet eats and drinks from. Food left in the dishes can provide the microbes with a good environment for multiplying (moisture, oxygen and nutrients) and can produce illness in people who touch the dish, or the pet, that eats or drinks from the dish.

The same good hygiene practices that apply to handling and storing food for people also apply to food for pets. Leftovers should be stored in a closed container and refrigerated if the food is moist.

To be safe, remember to wash your hands in warm, soapy water after touching pet food and feeding dishes. And wash and dry your pet's dishes and storage containers before refilling them with new food. Both you and your pet will be safer if you do.

