

# Food Hygiene for Cockapoos: Safe Feeding Practices



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# FOOD STORAGE GUIDELINES

## Dry Food (Kibble)

- **Store in original bag** inside an airtight container to preserve freshness and prevent moisture
- **Keep in a cool, dry place** away from direct sunlight (ideally below 20°C)
- **Use within 6 weeks of opening** – write the date on the bag when you open it
- **Never mix old and new food** in the same container
- **Check for signs of spoilage:** rancid smell, discoloration, mold, or insect infestation

## Wet Food (Tins/Pouches)

- **Unopened:** Store in a cool, dry cupboard; check best-before dates regularly
- **Once opened:** Transfer to an airtight container, refrigerate, and use within 2-3 days
- **Before serving:** Allow refrigerated food to reach room temperature (15-20 minutes) or warm slightly
- **Never leave opened tins** in the fridge – the metal can leach into the food

## Raw Food (BARF/Raw Feeding)

- **Keep frozen** until 24 hours before use
- **Defrost in the fridge**, never at room temperature
- **Use within 24 hours** of defrosting
- **Store in sealed containers** on the bottom shelf of the fridge to prevent cross-contamination
- **Never refreeze** raw food once defrosted



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# BOWL HYGIENE

## Daily Cleaning

- **Wash food and water bowls daily** with hot, soapy water
- **Rinse thoroughly** to remove all soap residue
- **Dry completely** before refilling – bacteria thrive in moisture
- **Use separate sponges/cloths** for pet bowls, not the same ones you use for human dishes

## Weekly Deep Clean

- **Soak bowls** in a diluted pet-safe disinfectant or white vinegar solution (1:1 ratio with water)
- **Scrub thoroughly**, especially around rims and any grooves where bacteria hide
- **Rinse multiple times** to ensure no chemical residue remains
- **Air dry completely** or use a clean, dedicated towel

## Bowl Material Matters

- **Stainless steel:** Best choice – non-porous, dishwasher safe, doesn't harbor bacteria
- **Ceramic:** Good option if lead-free and dishwasher safe; check for cracks regularly
- **Plastic:** Not recommended – scratches harbor bacteria and can cause chin acne in sensitive Cockapoos
- **Replace bowls** if you notice scratches, cracks, or persistent odors



# FOOD PREPARATION SAFETY

## Before You Start

- **Wash your hands thoroughly** with soap and warm water for at least 20 seconds
- **Clean preparation surfaces** with hot, soapy water or pet-safe disinfectant
- **Use dedicated utensils and cutting boards** for your dog's food (especially important for raw feeding)
- **Tie back hair** and remove jewelry to prevent contamination

## During Preparation

- **Keep raw meat separate** from other ingredients to prevent cross-contamination
- **Don't let food sit out** while you prepare – work quickly and efficiently
- **Portion meals immediately** and refrigerate or freeze what you're not using right away
- **Avoid double-dipping** spoons or utensils back into food containers

## After Preparation

- **Wash all utensils, boards, and surfaces** immediately with hot, soapy water
- **Wash your hands again** thoroughly before touching anything else
- **Take out the rubbish** if it contains food waste to prevent odors and pests
- **Disinfect high-touch areas** like cupboard handles and fridge doors



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# THE DANGER ZONE: TEMPERATURE AND TIMING

## Temperature Guidelines

- **The Danger Zone:** 5°C to 60°C – bacteria multiply rapidly in this range
- **Refrigerator:** Keep at 5°C or below
- **Freezer:** Keep at -18°C or below
- **Serving temperature:** Room temperature (around 20°C) is ideal for most dogs

## How Long Can Food Sit Out?

- **Dry food:** Maximum 1 hour in the bowl (moisture from saliva can cause mold)
- **Wet food:** Maximum 30 minutes at room temperature
- **Raw food:** Maximum 15-20 minutes (highly perishable)
- **In hot weather (above 25°C):** Halve these times
- **If in doubt, throw it out** – it's not worth the risk of food poisoning

## Reheating Guidelines

- **Only reheat once** – never reheat food multiple times
- **Heat thoroughly** if reheating cooked food, then allow to cool to room temperature
- **Test temperature** before serving – it should be lukewarm, not hot
- **Never microwave in metal bowls** – use microwave-safe containers only



# SIGNS OF SPOILED FOOD

## Visual Signs

- Mould or fuzzy growth (any color)
- Discoloration or darkening
- Excessive moisture or sliminess
- Insects or larvae
- Separation of ingredients (in wet food)

## Smell Test

- Rancid or sour odor
- Unusually strong or chemical smell
- Ammonia-like smell
- Any smell that's "off" from normal



## Texture Changes

- Dry food feels soft, damp, or sticky
- Wet food has separated or curdled
- Treats have become excessively hard or crumbly
- Any unexpected texture change

## What to Do

- **Discard immediately** – seal in a bag before binning
- **Don't taste test** to check – trust your other senses
- **Clean the storage container** thoroughly before adding new food
- **Monitor your dog** if they've eaten any – contact your vet if you notice vomiting, diarrhea, or lethargy

**Trust your senses! If something seems off, don't feed it to your Cockapoo.**



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# QUICK REFERENCE CHECKLIST

## Daily Tasks

- Wash food and water bowls with hot, soapy water
- Wipe down feeding area and mat
- Check food for signs of spoilage before serving
- Remove uneaten food within 30 minutes (wet/raw) or 1 hour (dry)
- Wash hands before and after handling dog food

## Weekly Tasks

- Deep clean food and water bowls with disinfectant or vinegar solution
- Wipe down food storage containers inside and out
- Check expiry dates on all food and treats
- Clean and disinfect feeding area thoroughly
- Wash feeding mats in hot water

## Monthly Tasks

- Inspect bowls for scratches, cracks or damage and replace as needed
- Deep clean food storage area (cupboard/pantry)
- Rotate stock – use older items first
- Check freezer temperature and defrost if needed
- Review and discard any expired items



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# SPECIAL CONSIDERATIONS FOR COCKAPOOS

Cockapoos can have sensitive tummies, so food hygiene is especially important!

- **Sensitive stomachs:** Poor food hygiene can trigger digestive upset more easily in Cockapoos
- **Food allergies:** Cross-contamination between different proteins can cause reactions
- **Bearded faces:** Food and water bowls get messier – clean their face after eating and wash bowls more frequently
- **Smaller portions:** Cockapoos often eat smaller meals, making leftovers more common – store properly or discard
- **Fussy eaters:** Don't leave food out longer hoping they'll eat it – this increases contamination risk



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# EMERGENCY: WHAT TO DO IF YOUR DOG EATS GONE OFF FOOD

## Immediate Actions

- **Remove access** to any remaining food immediately
- **Provide fresh water** to prevent dehydration
- **Monitor closely** for the next 24 hours
- **Contact your vet** if symptoms appear or worsen
- **Don't wait** – food poisoning can escalate quickly, especially in smaller dogs

## Symptoms to Watch For

- Vomiting or diarrhea
- Loss of appetite
- Lethargy or weakness
- Excessive drooling
- Abdominal pain (hunched posture, reluctance to move)
- Fever

## When to Seek Immediate Veterinary Care

- Severe or bloody diarrhea
- Repeated vomiting (more than 2-3 times)
- Signs of dehydration (dry gums, sunken eyes, lethargy)
- Difficulty breathing
- Collapse or inability to stand
- Seizures



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# TOP 5 HYGIENE MISTAKES TO AVOID

**Remember: When in doubt, throw it out. Your Cockapoo's health is worth more than a bowl of food.**

1. **Leaving food out too long** – Set a timer if you need to! Remove uneaten food promptly.
2. **Using the same bowls without washing** – Daily washing is non-negotiable, even for dry food.
3. **Storing dry food incorrectly** – Keep it in the original bag inside an airtight container.
4. **Not checking expiry dates** – Natural and grain-free foods expire faster than you think.
5. **Cross-contaminating with raw food** – Use separate equipment and wash hands thoroughly.





# FINAL THOUGHTS

Good food hygiene isn't complicated, but it does require consistency. By following these simple practices, you're protecting your Cockapoo from preventable digestive issues and keeping them happy and healthy.

Remember: When in doubt, throw it out. Your Cockapoo's health is worth more than a bowl of food.

For more support with your Cockapoo's digestive wellness, visit [trainingadviceforcockapoos](#) on Instagram or email [talk@cockapoo52.com](mailto:talk@cockapoo52.com)