

Is Your Pet's Food Being Stored Properly?

Common Mistakes That Can Compromise Food Quality

Learn how to store dog and cat food properly, prevent moisture, heat, insects, and quality loss, and keep pet food fresh and safe for longer.

Introduction

Choosing high-quality pet food is an important decision for our pets' health. However, there is one aspect of pet care that many families tend to overlook: how food is stored after purchase.

Did you know that leaving the bag open, storing food in a hot place, or using an unsuitable container can compromise its quality and preservation?

Exposure to air, moisture, heat, and light can contribute to changes in food quality. In addition, poorly cleaned containers and storage areas accessible to insects or rodents can increase the risk of contamination.

That is why knowing how to store pet food properly is a simple but important step toward preserving its quality and protecting the daily nutrition of dogs and cats.

1. Why Is Proper Pet Food Storage So Important?

Pet food contains nutrients that need to remain stable throughout the storage period specified by the manufacturer. Once the package is opened, the food comes into greater contact with the surrounding environment, which can accelerate certain changes.

The fats in pet food can undergo oxidation, a process that affects food quality and may cause changes in smell and taste. Moisture also requires special attention because it can encourage mold growth under unsuitable conditions.

Changes are not always visible. Therefore, even if the food looks normal, it is important to follow storage instructions and observe the expiration date and the recommended consumption period after opening, as indicated by the manufacturer.

2. Should I Keep Pet Food in Its Original Bag or Transfer It to a Container?

One of the most common questions pet owners have is whether food should remain in its original packaging or be transferred to another container.

Whenever possible, keep the food in its original bag, tightly closed, and place the bag inside a clean, dry container with a lid that helps protect against pests.

The original packaging is designed to help protect the food and contains important information, including the batch number, expiration date, ingredients, and storage instructions.

If you choose to transfer the food, use a container specifically intended for food storage and make sure it is completely clean and dry. Keep the information from the original packaging, and never mix old leftovers with newly purchased food.

3. Where Should You Store Pet Food? Heat and Moisture Matter

The location you choose for storing pet food is just as important as the container itself.

Choose a cool, dry, well-ventilated place protected from direct sunlight. Avoid storing food near the stove, oven, areas exposed to sunlight throughout the day, or places subject to steam and moisture.

It is also best to avoid placing food directly on the floor, especially in laundry rooms, garages, or storage areas where it could come into contact with water, insects, or rodents.

A clean, dry, protected pantry is usually a good option. The key is to maintain stable storage conditions and follow the specific instructions on the packaging.

4. Can I Mix New Pet Food With the Old Food?

Ideally, you should avoid this practice.

When new food is poured over the leftovers of an older batch, particles and residue may remain in the container, potentially compromising the hygiene of the newly opened food.

Before refilling the container, remove any leftover food, wash it according to the material's care instructions, and allow it to dry completely. Residual moisture can affect food preservation.

Also, avoid mixing food from different batches unnecessarily. If you are transitioning your pet to a different diet, follow your veterinarian's advice and keep track of the food being offered.

5. How to Store Pet Food Properly After Opening the Bag

A few simple precautions can help preserve your pet's food:

- Seal the package after each use, removing excess air when possible without damaging the bag.
- Use the original closure or another suitable sealing method.
- Protect the food from heat, moisture, and direct sunlight.
- Keep the package away from cleaning products, chemicals, and areas where pests may be present.
- Record the opening date, especially when purchasing large bags.
- Follow the manufacturer's recommended consumption period after opening.

Buying a very large bag is not always the most economical option. If the food will remain open for too long, choosing a smaller package that matches your pet's consumption may be a better choice.

6. How Should Wet Pet Food Be Stored?

Wet pet food requires special attention because it contains more moisture and may spoil more quickly once opened.

After opening a can or pouch, follow the manufacturer's instructions. If there are leftovers, place them in a clean, covered, food-safe container and refrigerate them when instructed.

Pay attention to the recommended storage period after opening, and discard any leftovers that exceed the suggested timeframe. Do not leave wet food in your pet's bowl for extended periods, especially in hot environments.

It is also important to monitor how long the product can remain unrefrigerated, following the instructions on the packaging. When in doubt, discard the food rather than risk feeding your pet something that may have spoiled.

7. How to Recognize Signs That Pet Food Should Not Be Served

Before serving the food, check its appearance and smell. Unusual changes may indicate storage problems.

Watch for the following signs:

- A rancid, sour, or unusual smell.
- Mold, unusual moisture, or kibble pieces sticking together.
- Insects, larvae, webbing, or signs of rodents.
- Damaged or punctured packaging, or signs of contamination.
- Unexpected changes in color or texture.

The absence of these signs does not, by itself, guarantee that the food is safe. Always respect the expiration date and storage requirements. If contamination is suspected, do not feed the food to your pet.

8. Common Pet Food Storage Mistakes

Some of the most common mistakes include leaving the bag open, storing food near heat sources, using damp containers, mixing old leftovers with new food, and purchasing more food than a pet can consume within the recommended period.

Another mistake is assuming that food remains safe simply because it is still within its expiration date. The stated date assumes proper storage conditions. If the packaging is damaged or the product is stored incorrectly, its quality may be compromised before that date.

Conclusion

Caring for your pet's nutrition does not end with choosing the right food. How that food is stored is also part of a responsible pet care routine.

Keeping the packaging tightly sealed, protecting food from heat and moisture, cleaning storage containers, and following the manufacturer's instructions are simple habits that help preserve food quality.

At Crescendo Juntos, we believe that care is also reflected in the little things. After all, providing proper nutrition is one of the ways we show love and responsibility toward our beloved companions.

This content is for informational purposes only. For specific storage recommendations, always follow the instructions provided by your pet food manufacturer.

