

When Was the Last Time You Cleaned Your Pet's Bed?

Keeping this clean and neat will make your pup happier, healthier, and more comfortable. Eliminate the guesswork — here's a step-by-step guide to help you get the job done.

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STORY AT-A-GLANCE

- A dirty dog bed isn't just smelly — it can harbor fleas, ticks, bacteria, and allergens that affect your dog's health and your family's comfort
- Most dog beds should be cleaned weekly or biweekly. If your pup sheds a lot, has accidents, or loves the outdoors, aim for more frequent washes
- Choosing the right bed matters. Washable covers, waterproof liners, and durable materials are small features that make big cleaning jobs easier and faster
- Follow a simple cleaning routine — vacuum, pretreat stains, wash, rinse, and dry thoroughly. Doing it right keeps your dog's bed fresh and your washing machine happy
- If the bed still smells or looks worn after a thorough cleaning, it might be time to replace it. A fresh bed equals better sleep and a healthier dog

Your dog's bed is their safe space — they can curl up, nap, and feel secure. However, lurking under the surface could be something less comforting, namely dirt, fur, germs, and even fleas and ticks.

You're not alone if you haven't cleaned your dog's bed in a while. Many pet parents don't realize that regularly washing their pets' bedding is important for keeping their pets clean, comfortable, and healthy.

This article will give useful pointers on how often to clean your pet bed and the best way to get the job done without stress.

Is Your Dog's Pet Bed the Right Fit for Them?

Before cleaning, you must ensure that the bed you bought for your dog is suitable for their size and how they use it. Ideally, you should choose a dog bed made from a durable, washable fabric that fits their sleeping style.

For example, does your dog love to curl up while sleeping? In this case, a soft, round bed may be ideal for them. If your dog loves stretching out, a more sturdy flat bed may be suitable for them.¹ Once you've selected the right dog bed, look for these features:

- **Removable covers** — You can put these into the washing machine.

- **Waterproof liners** protect the stuffing inside from spills, pee, or vomit.
- **Machine-washable materials** — Check the label before buying and washing.

Some beds, like plastic or elevated beds, are easier to wipe down. If your dog has allergies or gets dirty often, a simple bed with a washable cover and liner is best. You can also place a blanket over the bed and wash it weekly.

Why Should You Wash Your Pet's Bed?

You must establish a regular cleaning schedule once you've got the right pet bed. Ideally, you should wash the bed cover weekly or bi-weekly and vacuum it regularly in between.² A cleaning schedule is crucial, especially because it affects the health of you and your entire family. According to the American Kennel Club, here are the reasons why you must clean your dog's bed:³

- **Helps control allergies** — Washing your pet's bed reduces the buildup of dander and dust mites that can trigger and exacerbate allergy symptoms, especially if your pet sleeps in your bedroom.
- **Eliminates parasites** — Fleas, ticks, mites, and even roundworms can infest your dog's bed. Fleas, in particular, lay eggs at night, causing a heavy infestation without you being aware.
- **Promotes your pet's health** — It reduces their risk of infection, especially if they have open wounds or cuts.
- **Minimizes the risk of disease** — You can acquire zoonotic diseases, passed from animals to humans, when you come into contact with a dirty dog bed. Examples of zoonotic diseases include leptospirosis, Salmonella, and Staphylococcus aureus.
- **Prolongs the pet bed's lifespan** — Eliminating the buildup of dirt and grime, including coat oils, odors, fur, food spills, and bad smells, maintains the quality of the pet bed.

How Often Should You Clean Your Dog's Bed?

As previously mentioned, you should wash your pet's bed at least once or twice a week. A study published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal recommends at least once-a-week washings,⁴ to prevent parasites or zoonoses from spreading. Meanwhile, the EPA advises deep-cleaning dog beds, including the inner cushions, once every two to three weeks.^{5,6}

However, this is just a basic guideline — if your dog frequently has accidents, spends a lot of time outdoors, or sheds a lot, you may need to wash their bed more often. One tip — set a reminder on your phone to establish a routine.

Cleaning Your Dog's Bed — A Step-by-Step Guide

There's more to washing your pet's bed than just throwing it into the washing machine and letting it dry. Here's a handy guide you can follow.^{7,8}

1. **Remove the buildup of fur, dirt, and other debris clinging to the surface** — You can use a vacuum to do this. A lint roller or masking tape also helps. This part is important, since when water mixes with dog hair, it causes it to clump up and clog your machine.

- 2. **Pretreat the stains and odors** — If you see any messes like urine, poop, or food, treat those spots first. Using a paper towel, blot up the fresh mess. Spray the spot with a pet-safe enzyme cleaner, then scrub with a toothbrush and let it sit for 15 to 20 minutes. Repeat if needed and let it dry.
- 3. **Wash the cover** — If the cover zips off, wash it separately. Check the machine’s label to see if you need cold or warm water. Use a fragrance-free, pet-safe detergent, but avoid bleach or dryer sheets.
- 4. **Run an extra rinse or spin cycle to remove detergent and fur** — If you’re worried about hair clogging your machine, use a pet laundry bag.
- 5. **Clean the whole bed itself** — If it fits in your washer, wash it like the cover. If not, hand wash it in a bathtub or large basin with warm water. Add pet-safe detergent and 1 cup of vinegar, then soak the bed and knead it like dough. Rinse it thoroughly until no soap remains. Remember — never wash your dog’s bed on the kitchen sink; you don’t want germs in the same area where you prepare your food.
- 6. **If you wash the bed in the washing machine, and it is very dirty, consider running an empty cycle afterward** — This will help remove lingering odors. Put 1 or 2 cups of white vinegar and a 1/2 cup of bicarbonate of soda into the dispenser.
- 7. **Dry your pet’s bed completely** — A damp bed can grow mold and smell bad. If possible, air dry in the sun or use a dryer on low heat (if the label says it’s safe). Fluff the bed to prevent lumps.

You can do small things between washes to keep the bed clean and neat. Shake or vacuum it weekly, and spot clean spills immediately. Fluff and rotate the bed to keep it even. Also, check for signs of wear and tear. Frayed edges or broken zippers can trap dirt or tempt your pet to chew on them.

When to Say Goodbye to an Old Bed

Sometimes, a bed just can’t be saved. If it still smells terrible after washing or looks flat and stained, it’s time for a new one. Also, if your pet has fleas or a serious illness, you may need to toss the bed to avoid re-infection.

Look for a replacement that’s easy to wash and built to last. Investing in a good-quality, washable bed can save time and money.

Sources and References

^{1,2} [Pethood, January 18, 2025](#)
^{3,6,8} [American Kennel Club, October 24, 2024](#)
⁴ [CMAJ July 14, 2015 187\(10\) 736-743](#)
⁵ [U.S. EPA, Controlling Fleas and Ticks Around Your Home](#)
⁷ [The New York Times Wirecutter, January 24, 2024](#)
