

To remove bacteria from a flower vase, empty it and wash every surface with warm water, dish soap, and a clean brush or sponge. Rinse it thoroughly, then let it dry or refill it with fresh water for your flowers.

Wash the vase from top to bottom

Start by discarding the old water and any leaves or stems left behind. A vase can look clean from the outside while a slippery film has formed inside, especially around the waterline and at the bottom.

Add warm water and a little dish soap. Scrub the inside, including the base, corners, and rim. A bottle brush helps reach into a narrow neck; a soft sponge works well for a wide vase. Wash the outside too, particularly where you have held it while handling old flowers.

Pay attention to the feel of the surface. If it still feels slick, keep scrubbing and add more soapy water as needed. Rinse until the soap is gone. Let the vase air dry if you are putting it away, or fill it with fresh water if you are arranging flowers again.

Deal with stubborn residue

Dried stems and cloudy deposits can make a vase harder to clean. Soaking gives the water time to loosen residue before you reach for a brush. Fill the vase with warm, soapy water and leave it until the material is easier to remove, then scrub and rinse.

Choose tools that suit the vase. A delicate painted surface may scratch, while a heavy glass vase can usually take more thorough brushing. Avoid forcing a brush into a narrow opening if it might get stuck or damage the glass.

- Use a bottle brush for long, narrow interiors.

- Use a soft sponge or cloth for accessible surfaces.
- Wash the rim and base as carefully as the middle.
- Rinse away loosened debris and all visible soap.

If you choose to use a disinfectant after washing, check that the product is suitable for the vase material and follow its label for dilution, contact time, and rinsing. Never mix cleaning products. Keep disinfectants away from flowers, and rinse the vase as directed before adding fresh water.

Keep the water cleaner between arrangements

Once the vase is clean, remove leaves that would sit below the waterline. Submerged leaves can decay in the water, adding material that encourages bacterial growth. Use clean scissors or shears to trim stems before placing them in the vase.

Change the water regularly, and wash the vase again if the inside becomes slippery or the water develops an unpleasant smell. Refill it with fresh water after each wash. If you use flower food, follow the packet directions for the amount of water.

A clean vase is a small part of caring for cut flowers, but it is an easy one to notice. A few minutes with a brush leaves the glass clear and gives the next arrangement a fresh place to sit.

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