

You Can Make A Difference!

Cleaning up after your pet can be as simple as taking a plastic bag or paper cup along on your next walk. But what should you do with the waste you pick up? No solution is perfect, but here are the choices:

Flush it down the toilet. The water from your toilet goes to your septic tank or to the wastewater plant where it will be treated. To prevent plumbing problems, don't flush rocks, sticks, or kitty litter down the toilet. Cat feces may be scooped out and flushed down the toilet, but used litter should be put in a securely closed bag and put in the garbage.

Put in the trash. This might seem like the easiest solution, but it is not the best. Pet waste can cause health problems for garbage handlers and pollution problems at the landfill. Make sure the waste is securely wrapped before putting it in the trash. Put it in with household trash, not in the yard waste container.

Bury it in the yard. Dig a hole or trench about 6 inches deep away from vegetable gardens, children's play areas, streams, drainage ditches, or wells. Microorganisms in the top layer of the soil will break down the waste and release nutrients to the surrounding soil. Don't add pet waste or kitty litter to your compost pile. The compost won't get hot enough to kill disease-causing bacteria.

Information provided by
[www.keepitcleanpartnership.org/
pollution-prevention/scoop-the-poop](http://www.keepitcleanpartnership.org/pollution-prevention/scoop-the-poop).

Doo Good

Pick up dog doo. Protect streams.

Dog doo is more than a nuisance!

spreads disease

Giardia and accounts up to **20%** of the teria in our waterways.

hurts fish

Adding nutrients in farms that act like a fertilizer, making algae grow reducing oxygen levels.



The Facts

- Dog waste is cited as the 3rd or 4th largest contributor of bacterial pollution in urban watersheds.
- The average dog produces approximately 3/4 pounds of poop every day. 1,000 dogs will produce 750 pounds of excrement a week.
- Dog feces has phosphorous concentrations higher than found in cow and swine manure. Phosphorus is a nutrient that negatively impacts water quality and plant species.
- Nitrogen, found in dog urine, also causes contaminated runoff and leads to serious water quality issues.

PET WASTE, WATER QUALITY, AND YOU!



Pet waste carries diseases which make water unsafe for swimming or drinking. Pet waste may not be the biggest or most harmful pollutant in our streams, but it is one of the many small sources of pollution that add up to a big problem for water quality. Fortunately, there are some simple things you can do to help keep our streams clean and healthy.

This information courtesy of:

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How Do You Dispose of Your Pet's Waste?

When you clean up after your dog or cat, do you put the waste in the street or down a storm drain? Do you leave it to decay on the side walk or on the grass near the street? If so, you may be contributing to pollution or human health problems.

Storm drains in cities do not flow to the wastewater treatment plant. Instead, they drain directly in to our local streams. As rainwater washes off streets, roof tops, side walks, parking lots, and lawns, it picks up sediment, metals, oils, grease, and harmful chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers. Bacteria and other pollutants from improperly disposed pet waste can also be washed into storm drains when it rains.

Pet waste that gets washed into a stream uses up oxygen when it begins to decay. Low oxygen levels can harm aquatic organisms and degrade stream health. Pet waste also contains nutrients that can stimulate weed and algae growth. Perhaps most important, pet waste may carry diseases which makes water unsafe for swimming or playing in.

If you leave pet waste to decay in your yard, be sure it does not become a problem. To prevent water pollution, clean up areas near wells, drainage ditches, waterways, and storm drains. Always remove pet waste from areas where children play. To prevent possible contamination, wash hands with soap and water.

Are You Risking Your Health?

When pet waste is disposed of improperly, not just water quality suffers. Children who play outside and adults who garden are most at risk for infection from disease caused by bacteria and parasites found in pet waste. Diseases that can be transmitted from pet waste to humans include the following:

Campylobacteriosis— a bacterial infection carried by dogs and cats that frequently causes diarrhea in humans.

Cryptosporidium – A protozoan parasite carried by dogs, cats, mice, calves and many other mammals. Common symptoms include diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and dehydration. May be fatal to people with depressed immune systems.

Salmonellosis— the most common bacterial infections transmitted to humans by other animals. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, headaches, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Toxocariasis- roundworms usually transmitted from dogs to humans, often without noticeable symptoms, but may cause vision loss, rash, fever, or cough.

Toxoplasmosis- a parasite carried by dogs and cats that can cause birth defects if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy. Can also be a problem for people with depressed immune systems.

**THINK PICKING UP
DOG POOP IS
UNPLEASANT?
TRY DRINKING IT.**

**Pet waste washes into
our storm drains and pollutes
our streams.**



Carry bags with you to pick up pet waste. It's a good idea to carry a few extras with you in case you meet someone in need. Collect your pet's poop in a bag and deposit it in a trash can, or dump the poop in the toilet without the bag. Do NOT leave bags on the side of trails—there isn't anyone designated to pick them up! Routinely pick up your pet's waste (or hire someone to do so) so you're not contributing to decreased downstream water quality.

There are Scoop Law ordinances for most cities in Polk County. These ordinances govern pet waste clean up. The regulations state that waste left by a pet on any property other than the owner's must be cleaned up immediately. If the scoop laws are violated, the pet's owner could be subject to a **Class B Infraction resulting in a fine of up to \$100.**