

Are You Risking Your Health?

When pet waste is disposed of improperly, not just water quality suffers, your health may be at risk too. Pets, children who play outside, and adults who garden are most at risk for infection from disease-causing 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.
- * **Salmonellosis:** the most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans by other animals. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- * **Toxocariasis:** roundworms usually transmitted from dogs to humans, often without noticeable symptoms, but may cause vision loss, a rash, fever, or cough.
- * **Toxoplasmosis:** a parasite carried by cats that can cause birth defects if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy. Can also be a problem for people with depressed immune systems.

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.

In Corvallis – There is a Scoop Law ordinance (section 5.03.050.020.04) that governs pet waste clean up. The regulation states that waste left by a dog on any property other than the owner's must be cleaned up immediately. If the scoop law is violated, you could be subject to a Class B Infraction resulting in a fine of up to \$100.



For more information about ways you can help prevent pollution, call Corvallis Public Works at 766-6916.



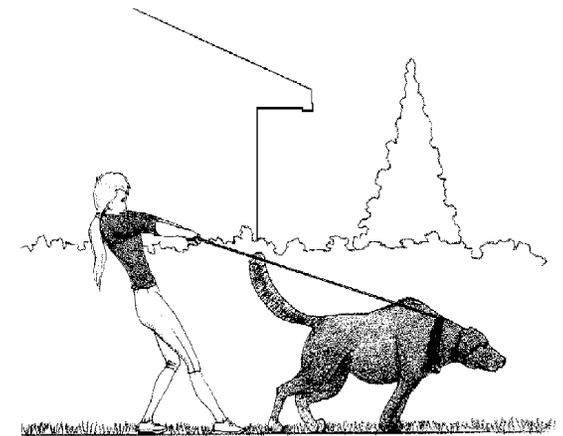
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Pet Waste and Stream Water Quality

Are Fluffy and Spot Polluting Our Streams?



How you and your pet can help protect our rivers and streams

How Do You Dispose of Your Pet's Waste?

Pet owners – 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 sidewalk or on the grass near the street? If so, you may be contributing to pollution or health problems.

Storm drains in Corvallis do not flow to the wastewater treatment plant, instead, they drain directly into our local streams. As rainwater washes off streets, rooftops, sidewalks, parking lots, and lawns, it picks up sediment, metals, oil, grease, and harmful chemicals like pesticides and fertilizers. Bacteria and other pollutants from improperly disposed-of 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 and, perhaps most importantly, pet waste may carry diseases which make water unsafe for swimming or playing in.

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 it in the trash. This may 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, and streams, drainage ditches or wells. Microorganisms in the top layer of 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 organisms.



Around Your Home – 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.

