

The concern:



Water quality studies indicate serious concerns about dog droppings and water bodies.

DNA analysis shows that much of the bacteria entering America's lakes and streams is coming from the pet pooch—because of the negligent owner who doesn't clean up after their pet.

A single gram (an amount about the weight of a large paper clip) of dog feces contains an average of 23 million fecal coliform bacteria, including E-coli.

Dog feces carry twice the bacterial loading of human waste.

Dogs also carry viruses, parasites, salmonella and giardia. These pathogens can be transmitted to humans in water. Nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) are also present in dog feces.

Material deposited on the ground near a stream, a lake—or a stormdrain—has a high probability of entering that waterway. Doggie doo is not an exception.

The number of licensed dogs in any community is usually about equal to the number of residents.

None of these dogs can flush. Their wastes are untreated, on top of the ground, and ready to wash away unless their owners pick up their leavings.

Studies in the United States and Australia have found that bacteria associated with dog droppings constitute 20% - 30% of bacterial content in surface waters; putting dogs third or fourth on the list of contributors to bacteria in contaminated waters (after humans and waterfowl).



The solution:



The solution to the problem of pet waste entering water bodies is simple: responsible owners clean up after their pets.

Do shoreline home owners and persons housing or walking dogs near a lake, stream or storm drain have more responsibility to clean up after their pets than those in the rural, upper reaches of a watershed?

Certainly—particularly if the lawn is mowed to the water's edge.

A buffer of unmowed, heavy vegetation is a margin of safety against nutrients and contaminants entering the water. A plastic bag with droppings enclosed and placed in the trash bin is better.

Responsible pet owners are valued participants in the effort to preserve and protect water resources.



Source waters of the stream.

More Information

Cat litter boxes can be a source of nutrient, bacterial and viral contamination if they are emptied where the contents can be carried away in surface runoff waters.



Bacterial infections killing otters and other aquatic mammals have been linked by DNA analysis to cat feces entering the water from tributaries and shoreline sources.

Being a responsible pet owner means taking care of the pet and also taking care of the watershed that you share with thousands of other people.

What can you do with the pet waste you pick up? There are choices:

1. Put it in the trash.
2. Bury it in the yard about 5 inches deep—away from vegetable gardens, streams, ditches or wells. Soil organisms will break down the waste.
3. Install a pet waste composter. Soil organisms will break down the waste.



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The Scoop About Pet Poop



**Protecting Water
Reducing Pollution**