



# Dog Waste and Waterways

*Taking care of your pet's waste helps take care of our water*

Dog poop left behind on public or private property is the source of major pollutants and poses a significant health risk. One gram of dog waste (the weight of a business card) contains 23 million fecal coliform bacteria—almost twice as much as human waste. Keep in mind that the average dog excretes 340 grams (0.75 pounds) of waste per day, and the piles can take up to a year to fully break down.

Did you know that dog poop is more of a pollution problem than cat feces, or that of other animals — even wildlife? An average-size dog dropping contains billions of fecal coliform bacteria—much higher than most other animals. Urban areas like ours have large concentrations of dogs, contributing unnaturally high levels of bacteria to our waterways.

## Water Pollution

Pathogens are disease-causing microorganisms that can contaminate water resources, making them unsafe for swimming or drinking. Nutrients, such as nitrogen and phosphorous, can cause runaway growth of algae and aquatic weeds, that in turn decompose and use up dissolved oxygen needed by fish to survive.

## Unhealthy Concentrations

Why is pet waste a health risk? Pathogenic bacteria, parasites and viruses in pet waste are a health risk to people and animals. Leaving pet waste on the ground in our yard or in public places may expose children, adults and even other pets to diseases. There is also a real risk of getting sick from drinking or swimming in waters contaminated by pet waste.

Pet waste may not be the largest or most toxic pollutant in our urban waterways, but it is one of the many little sources that add up to a big problem. Fortunately, there are some simple things we can all do to keep our water clean.

## What To Do With Pet Poo

- Always bring a plastic bag or two when walking your dog.
- Use the bag like a glove, scoop the poop, then turn the bag inside out and seal.
- Put bagged waste in a trash can.
- Never throw dog waste down a storm drain. These drains go directly to rivers and waterways.

If you are committed to keeping dog waste out of our water, join Canines for Clean Water at [eugene-or.gov/cleancanines](http://eugene-or.gov/cleancanines) and we'll send you a free bandana.



**Eugene Public Works**  
**Stormwater Program**



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