

Is it really all that important to Scoop Poop?

Picking up pet waste and disposing of it in the trash keeps our sidewalks clean and our neighbors happy. But it also protects water quality, keeping our water resources safe for drinking and swimming.

Why is poop a problem?

There are currently 72.8 million dogs in the United States—their waste is not suitable for compost or fertilizer. It can carry diseases and bacteria, which are unsafe for humans. When it rains, bacteria from pet waste can wash directly into stormdrains and drainage ditches and eventually into our waterways...untreated.

Animal waste contains nutrients that encourage excess weed and algae growth like the algae blooms you see in Ford Lake, Belleville Lake and Lake Erie. When pet waste is washed into lakes and streams, it decays, using up oxygen and sometimes releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm temperatures can kill fish and other aquatic life.



DO YOUR PART — Be an H₂O Hero

On a walk, picking up after your pet every time ensures that waste will not wash into stormdrains and eventually into nearby waterbodies. When nature calls, do the right thing. Always carry a plastic bag with you. Although some parks and beaches provide plastic bags, don't assume you will find a public dispenser. Plastic grocery and vegetable bags work well. Place your hand in the bag, pick up the waste. Turn the bag inside out, and then drop it in the trash.



Why Scoop Poop:

- Fight the spread of diseases and unsafe bacteria**
- Stop SIP (step in poop) occurrences**
- Increase public awareness**
- Encourage proper disposal of pet medications**
- Protect water quality**
- Encourage proper disposal of pet "sharps"**

What about kitty litter?

Kitty litter dumped outside can wash into streams. Bag it or double-bag it and pitch it in the trash.

Can I flush dog poop?

Sure you can. If you want to bring pet waste indoors and flush it un-bagged down the toilet, it will be subject to the same filtering and treatment as human wastewater.

Don't flush drugs.

Wastewater treatment facilities are not equipped to filter out drugs and personal care products. Dispose of unwanted pet medications through drug take-back programs. Check with your veterinarian, pharmacist or police department for options.



greatlakescleanwater.org

Sharps pointers.

Improperly discarded sharps—including lancets and needles—can injure family members, waste and recycling workers or end up in places where they are a danger to the public. Practice safe disposal by placing them in a hard plastic or metal container with a screw-on or tightly secured lid and taking them to a household hazardous waste collection event.

safeneedledisposal.org

Pet Waste Facts

Dispelling some myths...

Myth 1 FACT

Runoff from streets and parking lots that goes into curbside stormdrains is treated at wastewater treatment plants.

Stormdrain runoff is generally not treated and goes directly into our rivers and lakes. That is why it is important to ensure that pollutants such as animal waste, automotive fluids, garbage and chemicals do not end up in stormdrains.

Myth 2 FACT

Most water pollution comes from a few big polluters that dump or pipe chemicals or wastewater into waterbodies.

Today 75% of the pollution entering our rivers, streams and lakes arrives with the rain and melting snow that runs off hard surfaces such as roads, parking lots and rooftops. The polluting culprits are dirt, oil, toxic auto fluids, pesticides and fertilizer, salt and bacteria from pet waste and failing septic systems.

Myth 3 FACT

The impact of one household doesn't really matter.

Although an individual home might contribute only minor amounts of pollution, the combined effect of an entire neighborhood or city is serious. Clean water is important to all of us. Clean water starts with you.

Myth 4 FACT

Contaminated water and beach closings are usually caused by chemical pollution such as paints, solvents, and motor oils.

Contamination from chemicals is always a concern. Yet, bacterial contamination from animal waste, litter, failing septic systems and garbage also threaten waterways, beaches, wildlife and your health. Beach closings are actually triggered by bacterial contamination.



What is an H₂O Hero?

An H₂O Hero is someone who protects water quality in their everyday actions. They pick up and dispose of pet waste in the trash, sweep fertilizer spills off sidewalks and driveways, choose phosphorus free fertilizer, plant deep-rooted native plants or use rain gardens to capture and infiltrate runoff, and save water to save energy. When you help keep pollution out of our streams, lakes, wetlands and groundwater with simple steps taken right in your own home or back yard, you are an H₂O Hero!

Learn more about protecting water quality at hrwc.org.

Alliance of Downriver Watersheds

allianceofdownriverwatersheds.com



The Alliance of Downriver Watersheds (ADW) is a Southeast Michigan organization of 24 communities and public agencies working together to protect and sustainably manage water resources. The ADW area is 203 square miles where more than 450,000 people live. Its eight major watercourses drain to the Detroit River and Lake Erie.

About the H₂O Heroes Scoop Poop campaign...

The ADW and its 24 member communities are partnering with over 150 local veterinarians, pet supply retailers and service providers to protect water quality by promoting the importance of proper pet waste disposal. For "H₂O Heroes Scoop Poop" campaign information, contact Pam Labadie, Campaign Coordinator at (734)769-5123 x 602 or plabadie@hrwc.org.