

# 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 89.7 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
- Become an H2O Hero
- Protect water quality

## 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 unbagged 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](http://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](http://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, failing septic systems and garbage also threaten waterways, beaches, wildlife and your health. Beach closings are actually triggered by bacterial contamination.



## Huron River Watershed Council

[www.hrwc.org](http://www.hrwc.org)

The Huron River Watershed Council coordinates programs and volunteer efforts aimed at protecting and restoring the Huron. Our work is supported through the membership of individuals, local businesses, and more than 40 communities across Southeast Michigan.

## What is an H2O Hero?

You can be an H2O Hero! An H2O Hero 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!

## The H2O Heroes campaign...

Is brought to you by communities that are committed to protecting water quality and securing our watershed as a permanent source of clean drinking water, natural beauty, and diverse recreational opportunities. Partners include Ann Arbor Charter Township, Ann Arbor Public Schools, Barton Hills Village, City of Ann Arbor, City of Belleville, City of Chelsea, City of Dexter, City of Ypsilanti, Eastern Michigan University, Pittsfield Charter Township, Scio Township, Superior Charter Township, University of Michigan-Environment, Health & Safety, Washtenaw County Road Commission, Washtenaw County Water Resources Commissioner, Ypsilanti Charter Township, and VA Ann Arbor Healthcare System (VAAHS)

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