Pet Waste Brochure

Did you know?

Leaving pet waste where it drops is illegal in the City of Rockville. Violators may be subject to fines up to $1000 for each offence.

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So, what's the scoop on pet poop?

If not disposed of properly, pet waste flows untreated through storm drains into nearby streams and creeks every time it rains.

- Pet waste adds nitrogen to the water, which results in cloudy, green streams caused by excess growth of algae and water weeds. Decay of this extra vegetation depletes oxygen necessary for underwater life.
- Animal waste contains bacteria and other pathogens that: are harmful to human health; can cause beach closures and shellfish bed closures in the Chesapeake Bay; and can affect drinking water.
- The break down of pet waste in waterways releases ammonia and degrades water quality. Increased ammonia in streams can contribute to fish kills.

How can you be a responsible pet owner?

Pet waste is a small problem on an individual scale that adds up to a big problem for city water quality. As a pet owner, you are responsible for keeping common areas and your own back yard poop free. Fortunately, cleaning up after your pet is simple.

Flush poop down the toilet
The water from your toilet goes to a water treatment plant that removes most pollutants before the water reaches waterways. To prevent plumbing problems, don't try to flush debris such as rocks, sticks and cat litter. Cat waste can be scooped out and flushed down the toilet, but used litter should be put in a securely closed bag and disposed of in the trash.

Put poop in the trash
Use old plastic bags or commercially produced pooper scoopers to collect pet waste. Double bag and securely tie the pet waste and deposit it in your regular trash can.

Deposit poop in special pet waste trash cans
Some Rockville parks and dog parks have special trash cans just for pet waste. These are usually called 'Mutt-Mitt' of 'Doddy Calls' stations. You can also find plastic bags at these locations, just in case you forgot to bring one from home.

Hire a professional Pooper Scooper
Professional pet waste collection services clean individual back yards. They also will work with homeowner's associations to install and maintain pet waste disposal sites for common areas. Ask your veterinarian, pet groomer, doggy day care, or pet sitter for references or visit www.apaws.org.

Remember to Never:

- Put pet waste in the storm drain. What goes into the storm drain ends up in the City's waterways and, eventually, in the Chesapeake Bay.
- Put anything other then pet waste down the toilet. Debris, like kitty litter, can clog plumbing and cause backups.
- Think of pet waste as fertilizer – it's not. Pet waste is raw sewage and it carries bacteria and other pathogens.

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Bacteria and parasites can be transmitted from pet waste to humans and other animals.

Examples of pathogens carried in pet waste include:

E. coli and Salmonella – bacteria carried by dogs, cats and other animals. Common symptoms include sever bloody diarrhea, abdominal cramps, fever and muscle aches.

Campylobacter, Cryptosporidium, Giardia – Protozoan parasites carried by dogs, cats and many other mammals. Common symptoms include diarrhea, stomach cramps, nausea and dehydration. May be fatal in people with depressed immune systems.

Toxocara – Roundworms usually transmitted from dogs to humans, often without noticeable symptoms, but may cause vision loss, a rash, fever or cough.

Toxoplasma – A protozoan parasite carried by cats that cause birth defects such as mental retardation and blindness if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy; also a problem for people with depressed immune systems. Symptoms include headache, muscle aches and lymph node enlargement.

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