



El Cajon Storm Water Pollution Prevention Program Pet Care Tips That Help Keep Our Water Clean

We have all probably had some unpleasant personal experience with pet waste. It is not something we like to see, especially in a park where we want to walk or play. And we do not like to step in it, of course. But what we see is only one part of the problem. If not cleaned up and disposed of properly, the bacteria in pet waste gets washed into the streets, down storm drains, and into creeks, rivers and eventually the beaches.



How Pet Waste Can Harm Us, If Not Handled Properly

- Spreads diseases between pets.
- Infects children and adults with disease-causing bacteria and parasites.

When pet waste is not cleaned up or is disposed of improperly, not only does water quality and pet health suffer, but our health may be at risk too. Pets and children who play in yards or in parks where pets defecate are most at risk for infection from disease-causing bacteria and parasites found in pet waste.

So, What Diseases Are Transmitted By Pet Waste?

- **Campylobacteriosis:** a bacterial infection carried by dogs and cats that frequently causes diarrhea in humans.
- **Salmonellosis:** the most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans by other animals. Symptoms include fever, muscle aches, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.
- **Toxocariasis:** roundworms usually transmitted from dogs to humans, often without noticeable symptoms, but may cause vision loss, a rash, fever, or cough.
- **Toxoplasmosis:** a parasite carried by cats that can cause birth defects if a woman becomes infected during pregnancy. Toxoplasmosis can also be a problem for people with depressed immune systems, and has also been determined to be the cause of the population decline of the California sea otter.

Pet Waste Makes Our Yards, Creeks and Rivers Unsafe, If Not Handled Properly

Pet waste left on the ground often washes into storm drains and ends up in the our creeks and rivers, causing water quality to suffer. Pet waste, after being washed into the creeks and rivers, uses up oxygen when it begins to decay, causing harm to aquatic organisms and degrading river health. Pet waste makes our creeks and rivers unsafe.



HOW YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE AND KEEP OUR WATER CLEAN!

When walking with your pet, take a plastic bag or paper cup along and dispose of the waste properly by

- ✓ Flushing pet waste down the toilet, or
- ✓ Putting pet waste in the household trash after securely wrapping it. (Never put pet waste in a landscape waste container or the compost bin), and
- ✓ Be aware of and follow the Storm Water Management Ordinance that governs pet waste cleanup. The Storm Water Management Ordinance states, *"Pet waste shall not be disposed to the storm water conveyance system or receiving waters."* Remember that, if not cleaned up and disposed of properly, pet waste will eventually find its way into the storm drain system.

DO YOU KNOW HOW MANY DOGS LIVE IN EL CAJON?

- Around 10,000 registered dogs reside in the City of El Cajon.
- These dogs create approximately 5,000 pounds of pet waste per day!
- Pets, as well as humans, can catch diseases through coming into contact with infected pet waste.

The number of pets in El Cajon is much greater than the number of wild animals that once lived here. If we kept just a few pets their waste might not be much of a problem. But we keep a lot of dogs (and probably even more cats)

You wouldn't want to live in a city that lacked a public sewer system. With as many dogs living in the City of El Cajon, not cleaning up and properly disposing of pet waste can be a pollution problem. You can be an important part of the pollution solution.

