**Pick Up After Your Pet: It’s Polite AND Protects the Environment!**

We LOVE our dogs, but when pet waste is left on the ground, rain or sprinklers wash that pet waste and bacteria into our storm drains, which pollutes our waterways. It's a health risk to pets and people, especially children. It is also a nuisance in our neighborhoods.

Pet waste is full of bacteria that can make people sick. If it's washed into the storm drain and ends up in a river, lake, or stream, the bacteria ends up degrading water quality. People who come in contact with the water can get very sick. Unless people take care of it, the waste enters our water with no treatment.

**Picking Up After Your Pet Help Keep Our Environment Clean**

You can help keep our lakes, rivers, streams, wetlands, and groundwater clean by applying the following tips:

* **Bring A Bag.** Carry a plastic bag when walking pets and be sure to pick up after them. Clean up pet waste in your yard frequently.
* **Clean It Up.** Pick up after your pets before watering your yard or cleaning patios and driveways. Never hose pet waste into the street or gutter.
* **Dispose of the Waste.** Bury small quantities in your yard where it can decompose slowly. Dig a hole one foot deep. Put three to four inches of waste at the bottom of the hole. Cover the waste with at least eight inches of soil. Bury the waste in several different locations in your yard but keep it away from vegetable gardens!

In recent years, sources of pollution like industrial wastes from factories have been greatly reduced. Now, more than 60 percent of water pollution comes from things like pet waste, cars leaking oil, fertilizers from lawns, gardens, and farms, and failing septic tanks. All these sources add up to a big pollution problem. But each of us can do small things to help clean up our water too, and that adds up to a pollution solution!

Having clean water is of primary importance for our health and economy. Clean waterways provide recreation, commercial opportunities, fish habitat, and add beauty to our landscape. All of us benefit from clean water ‐ and each of us has a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater clean. For more easy steps on protecting our water, visit [stormwatercoalition.org](https://stormwatercoalition.org/)