

## Tips For Pet Owners

- Choose grassy areas, parks, or undeveloped areas to walk your pets. Stream banks should be avoided as the common territory of animals.
- Pick up after your pets. Pet waste left behind may be washed into storm drains, streams or waterways.
- Pet waste should not be added to backyard compost piles. Although animal manure can make useful fertilizer, parasites carried in dog and cat feces can lead to diseases.
- Regular check-ups and vaccinations by your local veterinarian are important to protect your pet against parasites and pathogens.



## References

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**Stormwater Hotline**  
**205.930.1999**



Jefferson County Department of Health  
1400 Sixth Avenue South • Birmingham, AL 35233  
[WWW.JCDH.ORG](http://WWW.JCDH.ORG)



Jefferson County Department of Health  
Watershed Protection Program

in Cooperation with the

Stormwater Management Authority

# Scoop Away The Pet Waste





## What Happens To My Pet Waste?

A hidden danger to public health can be found in your very own back yard. Pet waste left on sidewalks, streets, or other paved surfaces are carried by storm water into storm drains and streams.

Storm drains may not always connect to treatment facilities for water purification. Animal feces untreated can end up in local streams and rivers causing water pollution.

Decomposing pet waste consumes oxygen and can release ammonia. Lower oxygen levels and ammonia can result in harmful health effects to fish and aquatic life. Bacteria, viruses, and parasites transmitted by pet waste may pose a danger to the health of humans and wildlife. Nutrients contained in pet waste also support weed and algae growth.

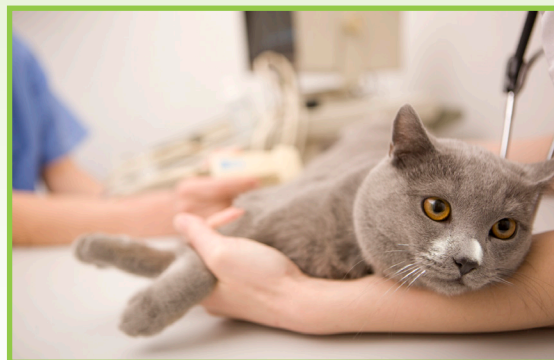
## What Are The Health Effects of Pet Waste?

Another health concern associated with pet waste is pathogens. If ingested, humans can be adversely affected by pathogens found in pet feces.

E. coli is a common bacteria. Prominent strains can initiate serious illness and even fatalities. E. coli, which causes abdominal gas and diarrhea, has been the source of disease outbreaks in several states.

Cryptosporidium is highly resistant to disinfection with chlorine. This microorganism causes gastrointestinal illness lasting 2-10 days in healthy individuals, but can pose a fatal threat to people with weakened immune systems.

Cat feces may contain toxoplasmosis, a parasite that transmits a disease to humans and other animals. Cats are the only animals identified to release toxoplasmosis oocysts, which are resistant to most disinfectants. Toxoplasmosis is a health risk for pregnant women and individuals with weakened immune systems.



## What Can I Do To Prevent Pet Waste?

Picking up your pet waste can result in a cleaner neighborhood and better water quality. Proper disposal of pet feces is important in reducing sources of water pollution.

Pet waste can be discarded by the following methods:

- Flushed down the toilet as long as it is not mixed with other material.
- Sealed in a plastic bag and put into the garbage.

These methods allow a community sewage plant or septic system to appropriately treat waste.

