

# PET WASTE AND WATER POLLUTION

**Pet waste left on the ground washes into storm drains and waterways, exposing humans, pets and wildlife to harmful bacteria and other contaminants.**

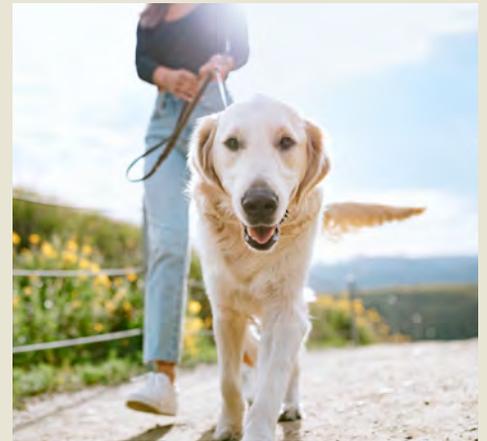


## **What is the city's policy on pet waste?**

Plymouth's City Code states that pet owners need to clean up after their pets (Plymouth City Ordinance 915). Before leaving the house to take an animal for a walk, pet owners must bring a bag along for proper disposal. While it is not illegal to leave pet waste in your own yard, the city asks that you pick up after your pooch to reduce the movement of bacteria into areas where it can be stepped on or washed into local wetlands, lakes and creeks.

## **How does pet waste in my yard pollute water?**

When pet waste is left on a lawn and is later rained on, it washes bacteria, viruses and parasites (such as worms and giardia) into stormwater, which can threaten the health of humans and animals. Pet waste also contains nutrients that promote weed and algae growth in lakes and rivers. Picking up dog waste keeps recreation areas clean, safe and beautiful. Similar to using too much fertilizer, pet waste can turn water bodies a mucky green color.



## **What about all the other animals?**

It is true that squirrels, birds and other wildlife also contribute to water pollution. However, these animals tend to spread out waste across the landscape, whereas dog waste tends to be concentrated in yards, pens and along sidewalks or paths. Pet waste also breaks down differently than wild animal waste, as it contains excess nutrients, which may cause algal blooms in lakes and streams.

## **How do I properly dispose of pet waste?**

Pet waste should be thrown in the garbage.



Flyer courtesy of the  
City of Eden Prairie. Adapted by  
the City of Plymouth.

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