

The Scoop on Dog Poop: 6 Dirty Secrets Everyone Should Know

Doo-doo duty: It's a crappy job, but you have to do it!

By *Nicole Sipe* | Posted: April 27, 2014, 6 a.m. PST

Believe it or not, this week is National Scoop the Poop Week. We know: On a scale from one to 10 of enjoyable things to do, picking up your dog's poo-poo surprises probably rank somewhere between zero and negative infinity. But picking up after your dog is important, and your job as a responsible pet owner.

How much do you know about picking up your No. 1 furry friend's No. 2? See if you can spot the facts from the fiction.

1. My dog's poops are actually good for the environment because they're a natural fertilizer. I think I'll leave them right where they are, thank you very much.

FALSE. Besides being a nuisance to see and smell (do you really want doggie land mines decorating your yard?), dog waste can pose a health risk if left on the ground. Contrary to what some people might think, dog waste is not a type of fertilizer, and is actually considered by the Environmental Protection Agency to be a "nonpoint source pollutant," placing it in the same category as herbicides, insecticides and toxic chemicals.

2. If I leave the poop on the ground long enough, eventually the rain will wash it away/it will disintegrate, and it won't be a problem anymore. Out of sight, out of mind, right?

FALSE. When it rains, dog waste left on the ground washes into storm drains and can contribute harmful bacteria to our waterways, including local lakes, streams and beaches. According to www.doodycalls.com, two or three days worth of droppings from a population of about 100 dogs can contribute enough bacteria to temporarily close a bay and all watershed areas within 20 miles to swimming and shell fishing.

3. You can flush dog poop down the toilet.

TRUE. In fact, flushing your dog's poop down the toilet is one of the best ways to dispose of it, according to the Natural Resources Defense Council. If your home is connected to the municipal sewage system, the poop will be sent to a wastewater treatment plant and eliminated of bacteria during the sanitation process.

4. You can flush bagged dog poop down the toilet.

FALSE. Unless you're itching to make an appointment with a plumber, do not flush dog poop that has been placed in a bag down your toilet. Doing so can clog your plumbing and mess up sewer systems.

5. Dog waste can be harmful to your health.

TRUE. Dog doo-doo can carry a crap-load (excuse the pun) of creepy crawlies, including heartworms, hookworms, roundworms and tapeworms. It can also contain diseases galore, including parvovirus, giardia, salmonella and E. coli. Ew! You don't want those disease-bombs sitting around your home or public walkways, so pick up after your dog, and be sure to wash your hands after doing so, or as soon as you can.

6. So what's the worse that can happen if I don't clean up my dog's poop? It's not like I can get a ticket or something.

FALSE. In some cities and counties, failure to clean up dog poop in public areas is a public offense, and can come with citations and fines.

Long story short: Scoop up that poop! Your neighbors (and the environment) will thank you.

Two or three days worth of droppings from a population of about 100 dogs can contribute enough bacteria to temporarily close a bay and all watershed areas within 20 miles to swimming and shell fishing.

100
dogs



20
miles



Dog feces are common carriers of:

- Heartworms**
- Whipworms**
- Hookworms**
- Roundworms**
- Tapeworms**
- Parvovirus**
- Giardia**
- Salmonella**
- E. coli**



DOG WASTE CAN HARM YOUR HEALTH

Unlike other sources adding to water pollution, such as lawn fertilizer, rinse water from driveways and motor oil, dog waste carries parasites and bacteria that can be transmitted directly to humans and make them sick.



The longer dog waste stays on the ground, the greater a contamination becomes.



Roundworm is one of the most common parasites found in dog waste. It can remain infectious in contaminated soil and water for years. A recent CDC study found 14 percent of Americans tested positive for roundworms.