

Remember, your dog isn't just making a mess on the lawn...



Image Courtesy of Puget Sound Action Team, a cooperative venture between the Washington State Department of Ecology, King County and the cities of Bellevue, Seattle and Tacoma

When our little friends leave those little surprises, rain washes all that pet waste and bacteria into our storm drains. This waste then 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.

How Can 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 residential car washing, cars leaking oil, fertilizers from farms, lawns, and gardens, pet waste 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 a clean environment 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 all of us have a role in getting and keeping our lakes, rivers, wetlands, and groundwater clean. For more easy steps on protecting our lakes and streams, visit www.mywatersheds.org.

