

# What is storm water runoff?

Storm water is water from rain. It flows from rooftops, through lawns, over paved streets, sidewalks and parking lots, across bare soil, and into storm drains to our streams, creeks, and rivers. As it flows, runoff collects and transports pet waste, soil, pesticides, fertilizers, oil and grease, litter, and other pollutants. These materials carried with the storm water are called non-point source pollution, and are some of the largest sources of pollution to our water.

## The Fertilizer Myth

Contrary to popular belief, carnivorous animals, such as dogs, do not produce useable manurefertilizer for plants. Beneficial fertilizer comes from herbivores like horses and cows. These animals consume vegetation and return unused waster back to the soil to be taken up by plants.

## What does that mean?

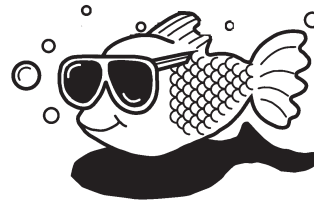
When it rains, the potential exists for thousands of pounds of waste to wash down the storm drains and into our streams, rivers, and lakes – untreated! That means harmful bacteria associated with all this dog waste is going to our water.



**For more information, contact:**

**Addison Infrastructure and Development Services**

**Addison Service Center  
16801 Westgrove  
Marissa Paz  
Management Assistant  
972.450.2818**



# Pet Waste & Water Quality

**Pet Waste is a health hazard and a water pollutant**

# Are you polluting our waterways?

When pet waste is left on the ground or disposed of improperly, water quality and your health may be at risk. Storm water runoff can pick up pet waste as it washes down the storm drains, drainage ditches, and into our rivers, lakes, and streams. Pet waste that is not picked up **can pollute our water.**

Bacteria, parasites, and viruses contained in pet waste are a health hazard. Pets, children who play outside, and adults who garden are at risk of infection from these pathogens. Consider some of these:

- **Fecal Coliform.**

Found in the feces of warm blooded animals, this indicator bacteria is a potential health risk for individuals exposed to it in the water. A single gram of pet waste contains an average of 23 million fecal coliform bacteria.

- **Salmonellosis.**

The most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans and other animals.

- **Toxocariasis.**

Roundworms usually transmitted from dogs to humans.

- **Toxoplasmosis.**

A parasite carried by cats that can be a problem for people with depressed immune systems.



## Other problems...

Pet waste not only risks the health of other animals and people, it can cause serious water quality problems.

Pet waste is high in nutrients, which

feed the weeds and algae that can choke out our creeks and lakes. The water becomes cloudy and green – unattractive for swimming, boating, and fishing. Excessive nutrients are a major cause of water quality decline.

When pet waste is washed into

lakes and streams the waste decays, using up oxygen and sometimes releasing ammonia. Low oxygen levels and ammonia combined with warm temperatures can kill fish and other aquatic life.

## I want to be a responsible Pet Owner, but does this mean I have to pick up after my pet?

Yes, you do have to “scoop the poop” but it’s a small price to pay to protect our water quality.

Whether in your yard or walking your dog, you can easily do the right thing. Purchase a “pooper scooper” or simply use a shovel and/or plastic bag.

## What you can do...

- Pick up pet waste from your yard. It is not fertilizer.
- Carry disposable bags while walking your dog to pick up and dispose of waste in the trash.
- Flush your pet’s waste down the toilet to be treated.
- Bury pet waste in the yard, at least 6 inches deep and cover with soil. It will decompose slowly. Bury the waste in several different locations in the yard and keep it away from vegetable gardens.