

## What should I do?

When out for a walk and at home:

1. Pick it up
2. Bag it
3. Throw it in the trash

1



2



3



### Can I flush it?

No. In the past, some pet owners were advised to flush pet waste. Flushing is no longer recommended because septic systems and municipal waste water treatment facilities are not designed to handle pet wastes.

1. Pick it up
2. Bag it
3. Throw it in the trash

### What about composting?

Composting is not effective at killing the fecal coliform bacteria in pet waste. It's simply not a safe solution. Landfills are designed to safely handle substances like dog waste, kitty litter and dirty diapers. These items account for less than 2% of landfill volume- so don't hesitate to throw it in the trash.

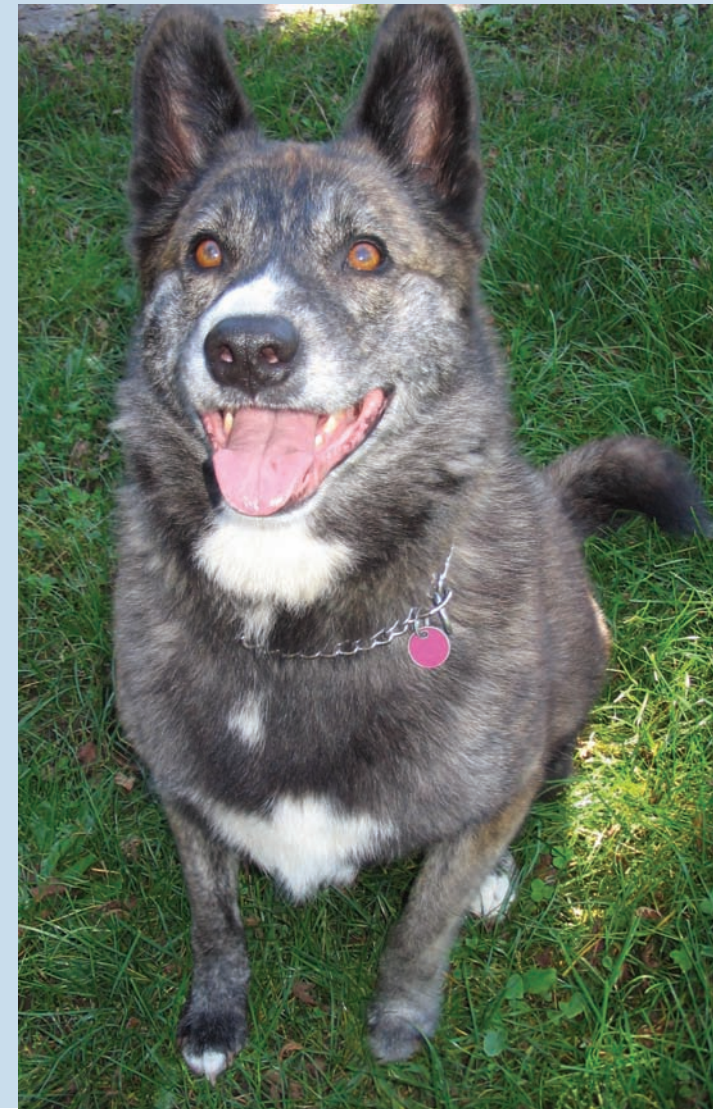
Produced by the Pacific Shellfish Institute with funding from the Russell Family Foundation. 10/2010



Pacific Shellfish Institute  
120 State Avenue NE #1056  
Olympia, WA 98501  
(360) 754-2741  
[www.pacshell.org](http://www.pacshell.org)

# Pet Waste:

## What's the problem?



## What's the problem?

The impact of pet waste went unrecognized for decades, but now we know it can harm:

- people
- animals
- fish
- shellfish
- water quality

## It can make me sick?

Dog poop contains a lot of fecal coliform- twice that of human feces. It can also contain bacteria, viruses and parasitic worms which can transmit disease to humans. Children are especially vulnerable to sickness. Some pathogens (germs that transmit disease) can be transferred among pets, other domestic animals, and even marine mammals.

## Is it really a big deal?

Yes. An average dog poops 1/2-3/4 pounds a day, containing 5.2-7.8 billion fecal coliform. Scooping your pet's poop isn't just a courtesy for those walking behind you, it's the healthy thing to do!



## Pet waste in our water?

Numerous studies clearly link pet wastes and waterborne bacterial pollution. Once in our rivers, lakes, and streams, the bacteria and pathogens end up in fish and other aquatic life. That's raw sewage introduced into the places we swim, boat, fish or gather food. Yuck!



## Can it cause hypoxia?

Water bodies with low oxygen content are referred to as hypoxic. Pet waste can reduce the oxygen content in waterways and makes it difficult for aquatic life to survive.

Hypoxia often results when organic matter, like feces, stimulates excessive plankton growth. Plankton are small aquatic plants (algae), animals and even bacteria. Although an important food for most aquatic life, excessive plankton growth, or blooms, and their subsequent decay consumes enormous amounts of oxygen.

## More poop pointers

Picking up pet waste also helps:

- Avoid fines
- Prevent messes on shoes
- Keep shellfish beds and swimming beaches open
- Ensure a healthier environment