

# Pet Waste Disposal

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## Why do I need to pick up after my pets?

Pet waste in parks, yards and on sidewalks is gross, but is also a threat to the health of our waterways. During heavy rain or spring run-off, pet waste on the ground is washed into nearby streams, lakes and other bodies of water. This leads to increased levels of bacteria, which poses a threat to both environmental and human health.

Pet waste also increases the levels of Nitrogen and Phosphorus in the water. This leads to an overgrowth of algae which blocks sunlight from reaching the aquatic plants beneath it. As the algae grows and dies, it depletes oxygen from the water which other living things, like fish, need to survive.

Research in the United States showed that [20% to 30% of the bacteria in some urban watersheds is linked to dog waste](#). Careful management of pet waste can have a huge impact on the state of our waterways.



**The first step is to pick up after your pets.** Always pick up after your dog during a walk, and clean the dog waste from your yard regularly. Make sure waste from any pets is not left somewhere that it will be exposed to rain and potentially stream into drains or nearby bodies of water. What you do with the waste after that will depend on your location.

Where

## Where do I dispose of pet waste?

Disposal of pet waste varies between locations. In the township of Langley, pet waste can be disposed of in regular curb-side garbage. The city of Abbotsford asks residents to double bag cat litter before putting it in the garbage, but to only dispose of small amounts of dog waste – also double bagged – this way. Some areas also have special bins for dog waste. These are often found in parks and have a stick-figure image of a dog on them.



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## Composting

Composting dog waste is one alternative to throwing it in the trash. Most households that have only a few dogs as pets can simply mix the collected waste into a regular compost pile. Dog waste is high in nitrogen, which you can balance out by adding carbon rich materials like saw dust, dead leaves, or shredded straw, hay or newspaper.

For small pets - like rabbits, hamsters, or gerbils – compostable bedding is available and can be added straight into your compost bin. Avoid composting waste from any pets that eat meat or fish, are sick, or are allowed to roam freely where they may hunt or eat random bits of food.

The composting process creates heat which can kill pathogens in the compost. The pile will need to reach 74C (165F) for at least 5 days to fully sanitize it. Backyard piles usually do not reach a high enough temperature, so this compost should not be used to fertilize food gardens.

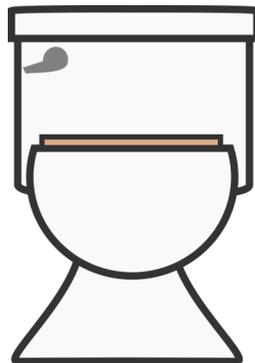
## What about other disposal methods?

- Flush it down the toilet, where it will go to a wastewater treatment plant. Don't flush plastic bags, even biodegradable ones, put them in the garbage instead. Don't flush cat litter either, it will expand and can clog or damage pipes. This option is better for households connected to a sewer, as the excess waste can overwhelm a septic system.
- Use a pet waste collection service. This is one of the pricier options, but ensures the waste is disposed of and treated effectively.

**Soiled cat litter can contain a parasite that is dangerous to humans and should never be composted, used in gardens, or handled without gloves and thoroughly washing hands afterwards.**



*Use specially marked bins when available.*



*Flush dog waste (without bags) down the toilet.*



*Compost waste away from water sources and food gardens.*

*Information from:*

<https://www.abbotsford.ca/sites/default/files/2021-02/Pet%20Owners%20Guide%20to%20Managing%20Pet%20Waste.pdf>

<https://www.tol.ca/news/2017-07-17-pet-waste-disposal/>

<https://usatoday30.usatoday.com/news/science/2002-06-07-dog-usat.htm>

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