



Dog Fouling

The importance of cleaning up after your dog

With 8 million dogs owned in the UK, it is fair to say that we are still a nation of dog lovers, but with ownership comes responsibility, and a mounting issue for many people is the offensive mess sometimes left in public places, otherwise known as dog fouling.



There are multiple issues surrounding dog fouling, but crucially, by law, it is an offence for any person who is responsible for a dog not to remove and correctly dispose of any faeces in any public open space. This carries with it a fixed penalty of £75, but fines for serious cases can reach £1000.

More about correct disposal later, but firstly; why is it illegal?

There are several diseases both humans and dogs can catch from dog faeces, even from a healthy pet. Campylobacter, salmonella, giardia and worms can affect humans quite seriously, and in addition parvovirus may be fatal in dogs. All of these are spread from infected faeces. However the law is in place specifically for a disease called Toxocariasis.

This is caused by the eggs of a dog roundworm, which are found in contaminated soil or sand. They last for many months and if we inadvertently eat this soil/sand then we can become ill. Children are greatest at risk due to their increased likelihood to place dirty hands in their mouths. Symptoms are rare, but can be very severe if the eggs enter the liver, lungs, eyes or brain. Regular worming of dogs will reduce the production of these eggs, but unfortunately only 1 in 4 dog owners do this regularly enough.

Diseases aside, who hasn't had a pleasant outing marred by a shoe, pram or bike wheel being caked in the foul stuff? As a mum of small children we have resorted to a special brush stored outside, such is the regularity of such a disaster.

Finally disposal; In an ideal world there would be dog bins on all walks for the easy disposal of the bags, unfortunately this is not always the case. Bags can be dropped in normal waste bins, but if none there, then the bags must be taken away with you. Please do not throw it into a tree/bush expecting it to disappear without a trace. These bags take years to degrade, and often catch on a branch and hang there, which will never enhance the view.

Please act responsibly and allow everyone to enjoy our fantastic countryside.

By Emma Coles Veterinary Surgeon at Drove Veterinary Hospital

