

## Dog fouling health risks

While many dog owners take responsibility for their activities, there is a risk to public health from the conduct of the minority who neglect to clean up dog foul.

Dog fouling is a cause for concern, it is unsightly and causes mess but also carries many health risks.

Dog faeces can include bacteria and parasites that are harmful to humans, particularly young children as their immune systems are not fully developed. Dogs can deposit roundworm eggs known as *Toxocara canis* in their faeces. If swallowed, these tiny organisms are quickly transmitted between animals and people causing illness and disease that can travel throughout the body to the brain, lungs, kidneys, liver, heart and eyes. Roundworm larva can potentially cause stomach upsets, sore throats, asthma, and, in some rare cases blindness. These eggs can remain active on the ground for many years, even after the initial dog mess has worn away. There are approximately 120 cases of *Toxocara Canis* per year in the UK, very few of which are severe.

Bacteria and parasites can spread from a pile of faeces on the bottom of shoes and even on the feet of flies and other insects, in addition to direct hand-to-mouth transmission and direct skin contact with larvae.

Other harmful diseases caused by dog fouling, include:

- **Salmonella** – The most common bacterial infection transmitted to humans from dog faeces. This can even be excreted in the faeces of healthy dogs.
- **E Coli** – This bacterium lives in the intestines of dogs. E Coli can also be life-threatening for people with compromised immune systems. Certain strains of E Coli can escape into the bloodstream.
- **Yersiniosis** – a bacterial illness that can lead to intestinal infection in people.
- **Campylobacteriosis** - This can be a life-threatening infection for people with compromised immune systems, as it spreads to the bloodstream.

There is also a risk to the environment, as dog excrement can also contaminate waterways, causing fish and other species to be killed by nutrients from the overgrowth of harmful algae and toxic weeds.

## **Public information and education campaign**

A proactive public information and education campaign, advising of health considerations, the impact of dog nuisance and the reasons for subsequent enforcement action will run on a two-year programme. We will have routine events in the Quarry in Shrewsbury and events in other market towns in Shropshire, to raise awareness. Along with information available on the Council website.

In response to public complaint, we will have pop up events, where we will have a presents and leaflet material supporting information to stimulate conversations with the public, led by the Dog Warden.

To tackle the problem of dog fouling, it is important to understand the barriers to behaviour change. It is hoped that dog owners will be motivated by awareness of the health risks caused by uncleared dog faeces.

The education campaigns carried out will aim to target all ages and communicate the dangers of toxocariasis, a disease that can result in blindness, especially in young children.

The Dog's Trust and Keep Britain Tidy run an innovative campaign 'Walk This Way' that is aimed at reducing dog fouling. Working with local Authorities, they provide, installation material needed to map dog walking routs, colourful route markers and bin stickers to encourage proper waste disposal.

As part of the consultation, The Dog's Trust have offered to work with us, which is welcomed. We will involve them actively in the campaign and encourage them to attend events when they are able to.

Below is a sample of the project material:

[Walk This Way More Info.pdf](#)