

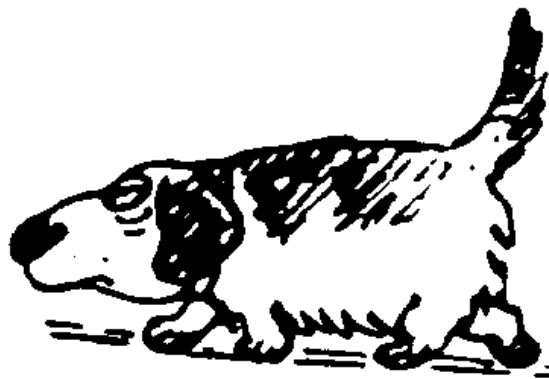
FACT SHEET 1 - Dog Fouling

How many dogs are there in the UK?

In 2000 to 2001 the population of dogs in the UK has been reported as between 6.5 million and 7.4 million.

How much faeces do dogs produce?

Across the Country it is estimated 1000 tonnes of dog faeces are produced every day. Other estimates calculate that each dog produces 100 – 200g of faeces and 0.25 – 1.25 litres of urine each day.



Is dog faeces harmful to humans?

Humans can get the roundworm - *Toxocara* - from dog faeces. This infection is usually picked up by the person coming into contact with soil or sand contaminated with faeces carrying eggs of the parasite. The problem is made worse because as the parasite can last up to two years, contaminated soil and sand is often the carrier after the faeces degrades. The parasite can only infect humans if swallowed, but once swallowed the infection can last between 6 and 24 months. Frequently the infection is through hands, but can also be through contact with the dogs themselves or through inanimate objects such as wheels of toys, soles of shoes etc. It is therefore no surprise that most cases of *Toxocara* are in children aged between 18 months and 5 years.

Where are *Toxocara* eggs most likely to be found?

Many infected soil samples are found in the vicinity of children's play areas, even though dogs are often banned from these areas. Other samples are found on streets. In the UK, about half of the most serious cases of *Toxocariasis*, such as blindness, occur in families who have never owned a dog or a cat.

Are all dogs infected with *Toxocara* worms?

Almost all puppies are infected with *Toxocara* and produce larger numbers of eggs than adult dogs. However, the prevalence of *Toxocara* diminishes as the dog grows older.

Is it dangerous for me to clear up after my dog?

Toxocara eggs are not infectious until they hatch which is usually at least 2 – 3 weeks after they have been deposited by a dog. Therefore freshly deposited faeces are not infectious, and you can safely clear up after your dog.

Are there many eggs in a single dog mess?

A single dog mess contains approximately 1 million microscopic eggs.

How many people in the UK have been infected with *Toxocariasis*?

Reports show that human *toxocariasis* is a frequent and potentially serious infection. There is a debate however, on the exact number of incidences in humans, which varies from 1 – 4% of adults. However a study 1970 found that 2% of people tested were infected. Despite its age this study is still considered to reflect what is happening today.

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What are the symptoms of Toxocariasis?

Eye disorders are the most commonly reported complaint associated with toxocariasis. The infection can potentially cause blindness through the growth of non-malignant tumours or the development of detached retinas. Toxocariasis can also cause flu-like symptoms which are not so obviously linked to the problem. Hence it is very likely that a huge number of toxocariasis cases go unreported and unrecognised by either the public or by doctors. Other symptoms are vague aches, dizziness and nausea, asthma and epileptic fits.

How many people suffer eye damage from Toxocariasis?

It is estimated approximately 100 cases are diagnosed each year, with 50 having serious eye damage. Nearly all are in children, who had contracted the disease as toddlers.

What is the legislation regarding dog fouling?

The Dogs (Fouling of Land) Act 1996 allows local Councils to designate most public land as poop scoop. Previously, Councils had to secure the agreement of central government to make the necessary bye-laws. Under the new Act, failure to clear up on designated land is an offence and is subject to a maximum fine of £1000. Councils can also give offenders the option of paying a fixed penalty rather than going to Court. The main legislation relating to dog fouling is dealt with under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (Part IV). This only applies to England; legislation is slightly different in Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

What can I do about a dog fouling offence?

If you wish to take action against a dog owner who has not cleaned up after their dog, you should note what happened. Include the name and address of the person in charge of the dog, a description of the dog plus details of the date, time and place of the offence. Contact the Stafford Borough Council dog warden on 07800 619636 and report the incident.

The Borough Council can take action in the courts but if this happens you will probably need to give evidence. However if the fouling occurs at regular times, it may be possible for a dog warden to witness the fouling and take action accordingly. In the first instance the Borough Council might warn the offender before taking legal action and this warning may be sufficient to deter further offences.

What is the best way to clear up after my dog?

Use a doggy bag, or a carrier bag, to pick up the faeces. Stafford Borough Council no longer provide special bin for dog mess, however you can place the bag in any Council litter bin so long as it is securely tied. It is even better if you take the bag home. It can then be double wrapped before it is placed in your wheely bin. Stafford Borough Council provide "poop" bags. These are available from many outlets such as the Borough Council Offices, some post offices, and some shops. Please ring the Borough Council or your local Parish Council to find out where they are available in your area.



Want further information on this issue?

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