

## Please leave only pawprints

### Dog faeces - bathing water information

Bathing water samples, taken by the Environment Agency, are sampled and analysed for *E. coli* and Intestinal Enterococci, 2 bacteria found in the gut of many animals such as humans, birds, dogs, pigs and cows. These are used as faecal indicator organisms for other pathogens such as viruses.

Dog faeces contain a particularly high level of various bacteria. There are almost 3 billion counts of *E. coli* and 350 million intestinal enterococci in one dog faeces. (Excellent water quality needs an average of less than 250 *E. coli* and 100 I.E per 100ml)

This means that one dog faeces has the potential to affect an area of water (0.5m deep) approximately the size of a tennis court so that it would fail the bathing water standard\*.

While dog fouling is certainly not the only pressure on bathing water quality, it can be a significant contributor. Unlike other sources of pollution, dog waste can be easily removed by the pet owner to prevent contamination of a nearby waterbody.

**Picking up your dog waste and disposing of it appropriately will help to reduce the number of bacteria in the water for swimmers and other users of the bathing water.**

#### Background

Bacteria can be washed in from roofs (bird faeces), from pavements or roads through surface water systems during rainfall, from misconnections from homes or businesses into the surface water, issues with overflowing sewers or consented overflows, agricultural runoff, washed in at high tide after being deposited on beaches by animals, or deposited directly into the sea or river by birds and aquatic animals.

Each designated bathing water is given a classification, from excellent to poor. Detailed information on each bathing water quality can be found at 'Swimfo' online.

If you do see a pollution incident, please ring it in as soon as possible to our free 24hr hotline 0800 807060. We are unable to attend all incidents and prioritise those with the highest environmental impact but each report matters, is investigated, and helps us to target our future work.

\* Reynolds, L.J., et al., *Correlation between antimicrobial resistance and faecal contamination in small urban streams and bathing waters*. *Sci Total Environ*, 2020. 739: p. 140242.

