

Dog Owners Urged to Pick It Up

International Pooper Scooper Week motivates pet owners to clean up after pets.

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Break out the pooper scoopers; it's time for International Pooper Scooper Week, which lasts April 1 through 7.

Dog waste is no joke, says the Association of Professional Animal Waste Specialists (aPaws), the group that established a special week of educating pet owners on the importance of cleaning up after their four-legged friends. The association was founded in February 2002 by a group of waste removers who wanted to do something about a growing problem.

The American Pet Association estimates that the 71 million pet dogs in the country produce more than 4.4 billion pounds of waste per year. Animal waste is more than just a nuisance – it can also pose a serious health hazard, according to aPaws.

That's because various common parasites, including roundworm, are spread via animal feces. When infected droppings are left on the ground, the eggs of parasites linger in the soil for years.

This leads to a risk of infection for anyone who comes in contact with the soil. Children are most likely to get infected when they play in the grass at the park or playground, and then put their hands in their mouths or rub their eyes, aPaws said.

These infections make people extremely sick, that's why aPaws urges pet owners to clean up after their animal, or seek a professional pooper scooper.