



# Pooping During the Pandemic (and Beyond)

While privies may not be at hand when you need one on the A.T. and using public facilities is underscored by the risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, the best course of action is to dispose of your poop in the woods using Leave No Trace principles.

Below are some guidelines for dealing properly with poop, toilet paper and feminine hygiene supplies in the backcountry.

- **Bury your poop away from the Trail:** Leaving uncovered poop and toilet paper along the A.T. is not only gross — it's a public health risk that could spread viruses and parasites (including coronavirus).
- **Bring a poo kit:** Come prepared with a trowel, toilet paper, hand sanitizer and plenty of disposable storage bags. This kit should come with you on every A.T. hike – from an afternoon stroll to a thru-hike.
- **Don't pee near the Trail:** You may walk on, but the smell lingers. Peeing near campsites, shelters and water sources is also a health risk for others.
- **Become a “cat hole” master:\*\*\*** Burying your poop in a cat hole limits germ exposure and helps with poo decomposition. Cat holing for poop disposal may be used from Georgia to Maine except above tree line.
- **When in doubt, pack it out:** Hiking above tree line? Don't want to dig in the dirt? You can also carry “WAG bags,” which allow you to safely carry out and dispose of poop in a trash receptacle off-Trail.

## \*\*\*How to dig a proper cat hole:

1. **Go before it is an emergency.** Digging a proper cat hole is much more difficult when the pressure is on. Don't leave your food or gear unattended in bear country (aka, the whole A.T.) — bring everything with you.
2. **Get off the Trail:** Walk at least 200 feet from the Trail and stay 200 feet from water sources to prevent contamination.
3. **Dig a hole** 6 to 8 inches deep and at least 5 inches wide. Save the dirt you dug out.
4. **Do your business.** All poop and used toilet paper go in the cat hole. **DO NOT** bury wet wipes or feminine hygiene products, as they don't decompose — carry them out in the spare storage bag.
5. **Fill it in.** Refill your cat hole with soil. If you don't feel comfortable stepping on your filled cat hole to pack it down, then it is not deep enough.

