



Turd Trivia

Fish do it, frogs do it, pythons, eagles and elephants do it, yet poop is one of those subjects we find difficult to talk about with a straight face. KIDS, however, are positively fascinated by it. Poop is interesting stuff - really!

Cleveland Metroparks Zoo's newest seasonal exhibit – The Scoop on Poop – opens May 22 through September 12 in the Exhibit Hall and Auditorium. Zoo visitors will improve their #2 IQ in Stool School - they'll listen in on an animal's digestive system, learn the language of poop in countries around the world, examine fecal samples in a veterinarian's lab, compete in dung beetle races, track wild animals by clues left in scat and much more. Animals use poop to build homes, hide from enemies, attract mates, send messages and cool off - some even eat it. With a tactful blend of good science and fun, Zoo guests will learn about what an animal leaves behind.

Test your turd trivia...

Is poop dangerous?

Yes, many diseases can be spread through the digestive tract and people often get sick eating tiny bits of feces in contaminated food or water. Outbreaks of cholera have killed hundreds of thousands of people worldwide.

Why do doctors and veterinarians look at poop?

Feces are full of clues about what's going on inside an animal. They can reveal what an animal has been eating, how well it's digesting its food and whether there are parasites or other signs of disease present.

Is there DNA in poop?

Yes, scientists can extract DNA from wild animal droppings to study population genetics, follow animal migrations, and plan conservation strategies.

How much do elephants poop?

Elephants eat tough, fibrous foods and most of it passes through their bodies undigested. An adult African elephant can produce up to 300 pounds of dung each day!

How do animals communicate with poop?

Many animal noses put humans' to shame. Foxes and other canines often deposit scat on high places in plain view. These scent posts let others know who the fox is, whether it's a male or female and if it's ready to mate.

Do sloths really poop once a week?

Yes, sloths live in cecropia trees and sleep 15 hours per day. Once a week or so, they climb down to the ground, dig a hole, and carefully bury their droppings.

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What's the world's best fertilizer?

Accumulated droppings of Peruvian sea birds, called guano, have been used to enrich farm lands for at least 500 years. The supercharged fertilizer was so valuable, the Inca Empire guarded it and punished trespassers with death.

Why do trees make fruit?

The answer is all about poop. When an animal eats a piece of fruit, it often swallows seeds which pass through the intestine unharmed. Every time a fruit-eater poops, it drops off seeds in a nutritious bundle of fertilizer and "plants" the next generation of trees.

Who cleaned up the big messes left by dinosaurs?

Paleontologists have found dung beetle burrows in fossilized dinosaur poop. They must have had an enormous feast!

How many kinds of dung beetles are there?

There are over 7,000 species of dung beetles and they're found on every continent except Antarctica. Most parts of the United States even have native dung beetles.

Ever heard of a turd tossing contest?

Believe it or not, cow-pie tossing contests are popular events in parts of Oklahoma and Wisconsin. The record distance for a flying cow chip is over 185 feet – more than half the length of a football field!

Good to the last dropping

A company in Indonesia makes gourmet coffee by collecting beans from the droppings of the palm civet, a cat-sized mammal native to Asia. The coffee is said to have a rich, "musty" taste and sells for \$175 per pound.