

Is Public Pooping a New Trend?



By *Jamie Wells, M.D.* — September 25, 2017



Credit: Pixabay [1]

It's been an enlightening week in the world of public defecation. Recent video captures of two serial poop-and-run culprits-- respectively deemed "[The Mad Pooper](#) [2]" and "[Poopman](#) [3]"-- have served to unite communities, corporations, media venues and police forces.

The Colorado female jogger, dubbed "[The Mad Pooper](#) [2]," who regularly deposits her feces mid-run in one neighborhood and park, despite many restrooms accessible in close proximity, was initially caught by children while in the process of relieving herself. The kids told their mother who confronted the woman before she left the scene. [Cathy Budde](#) [4] asserted, "Are you really taking a poop right here in front of my kids?" She reports the woman responded, "Yeah, sorry."

[Budde](#) [4] assumed the lawbreaker would go retrieve a bag to manage the mess and be so embarrassed that she would never return to the area. Instead, this defiant evacuator has made it a habit of near-weekly appearances and alternates her times to preclude discovery. Local police are puzzled by the motives albeit revenge or a mental health issue and advised Budde to take pictures when she reappears.

Through social media and the mainstream, the story exploded in exposure. Corporate America took notice. Charmin just tweeted it would provide her with a year of free toilet paper (TP) "to help her with her "runs."



Charmin  @Charmin · Sep 20



If the [#MadPooper](#) turns herself in, we'll give her a year's supply of TP to help with her "runs" 
[#EnjoyTheGo](#)



Police Are Looking For A Female Jogger Who Regularly Poops Outside People's Homes
[buzzfeed.com](https://www.buzzfeed.com)

Being that this type of elimination behavior is an equal opportunity offender, "[Poopman](#) ^[3]" is now on the hunt in Kentucky having been caught more than once on surveillance video by owners of a car wash business at their varying locations. The business owners turned to social media in hopes it could facilitate identification of the unwanted defecator.

In each case, very close by public restroom options were available. Nonetheless, the wrongdoers chose to blur the lines of "public" excretion and waste management.

But, why?

Until their capture, the answer will remain a mystery. Such an act can be rooted in a host of causes. A one off would be more reasonable for a person overcome by a stomach bug or food intolerance who just can't make it to the restroom. In these latest newsworthy scenarios, that situation seems unlikely given their recurrent nature. [Elimination disorders](#) ^[5] can have multiple etiologies, physical and psychological. They can be voluntary or involuntary, even mixed.

Young children can often act out in ways that manifest stool withholding behaviors. Because they can't sufficiently express themselves verbally, they may obtain control of their parents or an

extremely distressful situation by refusing to defecate. This can actually escalate to a physical problem that requires long-term medications and, on rare occasions, possible urgent manual fecal disimpaction.

Enuresis is the term for an inability to control urination. Nocturnal enuresis reflects overnight, or bedwetting. This can be normal at certain developmental stages of young children. Encopresis relates to stool. There are medical reasons why each can occur, at particular life stages, that range from spinal injury to constipation to diabetes to laxative abuse and medication effects, for instance.

Understanding the entire clinical picture, undertaking a thorough physical examination and reviewing the medical and personal history are essential to making any informed diagnosis regardless of type. A history of mental illness, developmental disability as well as childhood trauma or obsessive personality traits and oppositional defiant disorder could go far in explaining an individual's motivations.

The spectrum is highly variable. In more significant constipation, fecal material can mimic diarrhea when, in fact, it is typically fluid leakage around the site of the bowel obstruction. A study of problematic behaviors in those suffering from dementia in [International Psychogeriatrics](#) [6] concluded their "results suggest that both wandering and scatolia (fecal smearing) are behavioral symptoms intimately associated with cognitive dysfunction and insomnia."

Public (or open) defecation comes in many shapes and sizes as does its consequences like environmental contamination spreading infectious diseases. The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\)](#) [7] tracks closures and violations identified during routine inspections of public aquatic facilities which includes formed stool found in pools as well as perianal fecal material not comprehensively washed off due to poor hygiene, faulty swim diapers or swimming while with diarrhea etc. Children tend to be the most affected and the most responsible. Though, [as per the CDC](#) [8], "More than 1 in 5 (21.6%) of American adults do not know swimming while ill with diarrhea can heavily contaminate water in which we swim and make other swimmers sick."

Though an unlikely reason for these news stories, in general, geography and societal factors play a significant role too as [open defecation \(the practice of defecating outside and not in a designated toilet\)](#) [9] can perpetuate a cycle of disease and poverty. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates [15% \(or 1.1 billion people\)](#) [10] of the world's population practices open defecation which is why they are so committed to improving drinking water and sanitation in an effort to make strides in reducing the threats to public health and improving socioeconomic conditions. This issue is greatest in rural and less developed areas and nations, and WHO is dedicated to this mission.

Feasible explanations for accidental or intended public defecating can be made, but repetitive behavior in the same locations with ever-increasing intensity surrounding getting caught, along with active defiance of the local laws, speak to much greater complexity. Optimal medical care can serve to make meaningful inroads regardless of causal origin.

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Links

- [1] https://pixabay.com/p-1013732/?no_redirect
- [2] <http://nypost.com/2017/09/19/jogger-wont-stop-pooing-on-family-lawn/>
- [3] <http://nypost.com/2017/09/22/poopman-strikes-pair-of-car-washes/>
- [4] https://www.buzzfeed.com/tasneemnashrulla/the-fecal-finger-of-fate?bfbmain&ref=bfbmain&utm_term=.yond6PMZE#.nbyVyOG7w
- [5] <http://dsm.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596.dsm11>
- [6] <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/20170588>
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