

Blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) occur naturally and can produce toxins.

What is a toxic algae bloom?

Algae bloom occur in fresh water with the right amount of sunlight, temperature and nutrients. These conditions cause rapid growth of algae, which can float to the surface to form a scum. These scums often look like green paint, but algae can also form in dense clumps that resemble pellets in the water. Wind and weather conditions can change the amount and location of algae.

Toxic algae can make you sick.

If you swallow water with toxic algae, it can make you sick within minutes to hours. Kids are more at risk because their bodies are smaller. Talk to your doctor if you have these symptoms:

- Muscle weakness.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Nausea.

Skin contact with toxic algae can cause irritation or a rash. This is a different rash than Swimmer's Itch.

Toxic algae can make your pets sick, too.

After playing in water, pets are more likely to get sick from toxic algae because:

- Their bodies are small.
- They may drink water containing a large amount of toxic algae.
- They lick or groom their fur.

Talk to a vet if your pet shows these symptoms:

- Lethargy.
- Vomiting.

- Diarrhea.
- Convulsions.
- Difficulty breathing.
- General weakness.

Can I eat fish from toxic algae contaminated water?

Avoid eating fish from areas with visible algae. Always clean fish well and discard guts.

What should I do if I see an algae bloom?

- Don't drink lake water.
- Don't play in water with visible algae.
- Keep your family and animals away.
- When in doubt, stay out.
- Let us know. If you see algae at a lake that is not already posted with warning signs, call us at (360) 249-4222.

You can help prevent toxic algae blooms.

Animal waste, human waste and fertilizers contain nutrients that algae need to grow.

- Reduce fertilizers.
- Maintain your septic system.
- Pick up after your pets, don't feed waterfowl and keep livestock away from the water.
- Plant native plants between your yard and the water to reduce runoff and prevent erosion.