

**NEWS RELEASE** | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | August 11, 2020

## **Blue-green Algae: Know it. Avoid it. Report it.**

BISMARCK, N.D. – The North Dakota Department Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) reminds residents that hot summer temperatures and accumulated nutrients contribute to blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) blooms in bodies of water across the state. Blue-green algae, also referred to as Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), can produce toxins in the water called cyanotoxins. The NDDEQ responds to reported blooms across the state and tests water for toxins. If toxins are at an unsafe level, the NDDEQ issues advisories and warnings to the public.

People that swallow or come into contact with water containing cyanotoxins can become sick with diarrhea and vomiting; experience numb lips, tingling fingers and toes, dizziness, rashes, hives or skin blisters. Pets and livestock may also suffer adverse health effects. There are no known antidotes for the cyanotoxins produced by blue-green algae. Children and pets are at a higher risk than adults for illness because of their smaller size.

**Know it.** Blue-green algae can look like grass clippings floating in the water, clumps/puffballs or green cottage cheese. It can also make the water appear like spilled green paint or green pea soup.

### **Avoid it.**

- Respect advisories and warnings announced by the NDDEQ. All water advisories and warnings are posted at [www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS](http://www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS).
- Do not swim, water ski, or boat in areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum or mats of green or blue-green algae on the water; or let pets swim in or drink from affected waters.
- If you or your pet accidentally swims in water that might have a cyanobacteria bloom, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible.
- Do not irrigate lawns with pond or lake water that looks scummy or has an awful odor.

**Report it.** Report suspected blue-green algae blooms to the NDDEQ at 701-328-5210 or on the NDDEQ's Harmful Algal Bloom webpage at [www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS](http://www.tinyurl.com/WMP-HABS). Because it can take time to receive laboratory test results, we urge people to be cautious and avoid waters that look discolored, scummy, or have a foul odor.

Enjoy a safe day on the lake but *when in doubt, stay out.*

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### **For more information contact:**

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