

NEWS RELEASE | **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE** | June 11, 2021

Blue-green algae: Know it. Avoid it. Report it.

BISMARCK, N.D. – With temperatures nearing triple digits, the North Dakota Department of Environmental Quality (NDDEQ) reminds residents that hot weather and accumulated nutrients can lead to blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) blooms in bodies of water across the state. Blue-green algae can cause Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), producing 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; or experience numb lips, tingling fingers and toes, dizziness, rashes, hives and skin blisters. Pets and livestock may also suffer adverse health effects, which could result in death. 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 under the map tab.
- 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. 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.*

For more information contact:

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