

## How Can I Tell if the Water is Safe?

You may see these blooms on lakes throughout Wisconsin. They can be a variety of colors such as fluorescent blue, green, white, red or brown. More than one color may be present. They may look like thick paint floating on the water and frequently give off a foul odor.



## The Dos and Don'ts of Harmful Algal Blooms

**DON'T** swim, water ski, or boat in areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water.

**DON'T** let pets or livestock swim in or drink from areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water.

**DON'T** let pets lick the algae off their fur.

**DO** rinse yourself and your pet off immediately if there is contact with algae-affected waters.

**DO** look for beach postings and water quality notices before swimming.

**DO** get medical treatment right away if you think you, your pet, or your livestock might have been poisoned by algal toxins.

## Harmful Algal Blooms in Wisconsin's Lakes

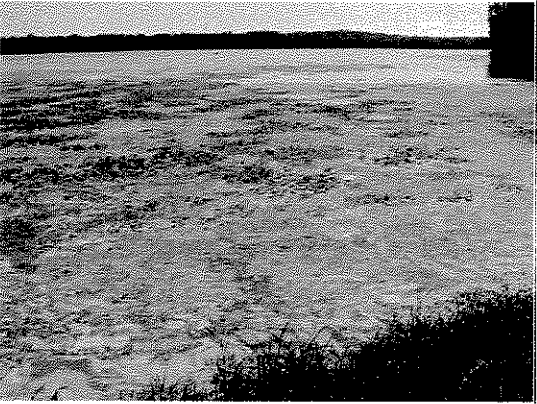


Harmful algal blooms (or HABs) are the result of a rapid increase or accumulation of algae in a surface water body. Cyanobacteria (or blue-green algae) can flourish and cause blooms in Wisconsin lakes in the presence of nutrients, sunlight and other factors. Some types of blue-green algae can produce toxins which can harm the liver or nervous system in humans and animals, and the blooms can cause GI symptoms, rashes or respiratory problems.

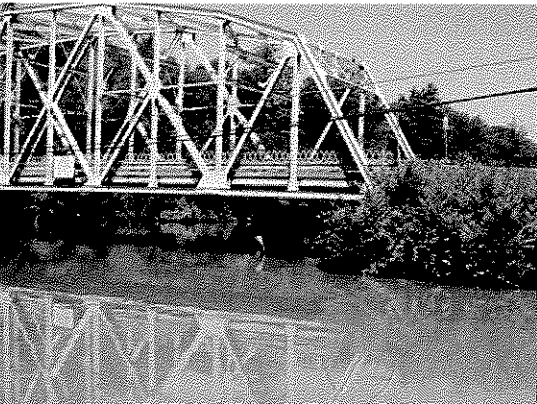
For more information or to report an illness: (608) 266-1120  
<http://dhs.wi.gov/eh/bluegreenalgae>



HAB-Related Dermal Rash



Large Decaying Algal Mat



Characteristic "pea soup" water

## Harmful Algal Bloom Surveillance Program

The Wisconsin Division of Public Health (DPH) is asking the public to notify them of any human or animal illnesses resulting from a blue-green algae exposure. Animal illnesses can include pets, livestock or wildlife.

The HAB program will collect information about symptoms and any treatment received or provided. They will also collect exposure information, and may seek to quickly collect environmental samples.

With this information DPH will be able to better understand and measure the public health problem posed by HABs, raise awareness of these problems, and inform efforts to prevent exposures from occurring.

## Potential Symptoms

Blue-green algae related illness becomes a concern for Wisconsin as the weather warms and people and pets spend more time outside on and near lakes. Illnesses can be caused by different types of toxins and symptoms can vary depending on the exposure. Exposures are generally grouped into: **inhaling** aerosolized water droplets that contain algal toxins, **ingesting** water with toxins or cell bodies and **skin contact** with scum or water containing toxins or cells.

### Common human symptoms

**include:** Sore throat, congestion, cough, wheezing, eye irritation, rash, blistering, abdominal pain, headache, vomiting, and diarrhea.

### Common animal symptoms

**include:** Lethargy, vomiting, diarrhea, convulsions, difficult breathing, and general weakness.

If you need urgent information related to a suspected algal exposure, you can call the

**Wisconsin Poison Center at:  
1-800-222-1222**