

# Keeping Your Pet Safe from Harmful Algal Blooms



## What you need to know about preventing algae-related illness:

- HABs or Harmful Algal Blooms appear on lakes and ponds during the summer and fall and result from an excess amount of blue-green algae.
- HABs can make recreational waters look pea soupy. They can also form a blue, green, red, white or brown scum layer on the water's surface.
- Some blue-green algae species can produce toxins that make animals and humans sick.
- These toxins can cause illness through inhalation, ingestion or direct skin contact.
- For pets, **ingestion** of toxins is the typical route of exposure.

Pets are especially susceptible to HABs because they don't naturally avoid green, smelly water likes humans do. Many dogs have gotten sick and **some have died** in Wisconsin by drinking water from lakes or ponds experiencing an algal bloom.

Pets also require ingestion of a smaller amount of toxins to harm them due to their smaller size.

## What You Can Do To Protect Your Pet

Be aware of HABs in areas where your pet swims or plays and watch for scum material on the shore. After a possible HAB exposure monitor your pet closely for the next 24 hours and contact your veterinarian immediately if your animal shows any of the following symptoms:

*Lethargy, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Convulsions,  
Difficulty Breathing, General Weakness*

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

**DO NOT** let pets lick the algae or scum off their fur.

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

**DO** watch for beach postings and water quality notices before swimming or allowing your pet to play in the water.

**DO** seek medical treatment right away if you think you or your pet may have been poisoned by algal toxins.

**Please report any algae-related illnesses  
to the Harmful Algal Blooms Surveillance  
Program**

The Wisconsin Division of Public Health and the CDC are asking the public to quickly notify them of any human or animal illness related to blue-green algae.

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