

Protect People and Pets

- Avoid exposure to water with a harmful algal bloom. Ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water. Keep dogs on a leash.
- Do not consume water with a blue-green algae bloom. Neither boiling nor disinfecting removes blue-green algae toxins from water.
- Consume only the fillet portion of fish exposed to a blue-green algae bloom. Toxins produced by blue-green algae can accumulate in the organs of fish (remove the fat, organs, and skin). Wash hands after handling. The risk associated with consuming fish caught in waters with a blue-green algae bloom is unknown.



Stay Informed

For information on current blooms and health advisories, see www.deq.idaho.gov/recreation-health-advisories.

Report a blue-green algae bloom. Contact a DEQ regional office or download the bloomWatch app at www.cyanos.org/bloomwatch/.



For More Information

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

State Office

1410 N. Hilton
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0502

Regional Offices

Boise

1445 N. Orchard
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 373-0550
toll-free: (888) 800-3480

Coeur d'Alene

2110 Ironwood Parkway
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814
(208) 769-1422
toll-free: (877) 370-0017

Idaho Falls

900 N. Skyline, Suite B
Idaho Falls, ID 83402
(208) 528-2650
toll-free: (800) 232-4635

Lewiston

1118 F Street
Lewiston, ID 83501
(208) 799-4370
toll-free: (877) 541-3304

Pocatello

444 Hospital Way #300
Pocatello, ID 83201
(208) 236-6160
toll-free: (888) 655-6160

Twin Falls

650 Addison Ave. W,
Suite 110
Twin Falls, ID 83301
(208) 736-2190
toll-free: (800) 270-1663

Web Resources:

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality:
www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare:
www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov

United States Environmental Protection Agency:
www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanobacteriacyanotoxins

Harmful Algal Blooms



Know what to look for when you're out on the water this summer and how to protect yourself if you come across a bloom.



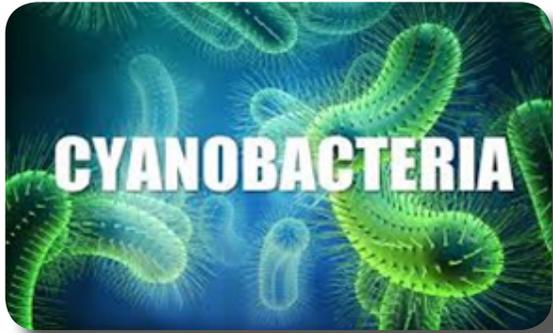
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What are blue-green algae?

Blue-green algae are tiny aquatic organisms that are not really algae at all, but a group of bacteria more properly called cyanobacteria. Cyanobacteria use photosynthesis, like plants and algae, to obtain energy from the sun. The pigments they use in photosynthesis give them unique colors. Under most conditions, many types of cyanobacteria are beneficial: they produce oxygen and food for animals that live in the water.



Cyanobacteria population growth is influenced by a variety of environmental conditions including temperature, flow, nutrient levels, light, and weather conditions. Although we are only concerned with a handful of thousands of cyanobacteria species, most thrive during warm, nutrient rich environmental conditions.



What is a harmful algal bloom (HAB)?

Cyanobacteria occur naturally and are part of a healthy aquatic community, but they typically exist in numbers too small to cause problems. During the summer, when days are long and water bodies warm up, cyanobacteria populations may proliferate, or “bloom,” to very high numbers. Blooms can vary in appearance and look like a floating mat, foam, spilled paint, surface scum, or grass clippings. In Idaho, blue-green colored blooms are most common, but colors can range from blue and bright green to brown and red. Some blooms produce a foul odor. Certain chemicals cyanobacteria produce during their life cycle can be harmful to mammals. When a bloom forms, these chemicals reach toxic concentrations resulting in a harmful algal bloom (HAB). Not all blooms are toxic; a laboratory analysis of a water sample is needed to determine toxicity levels.



Why are HABs a concern?

Exposure to cyanotoxins can be a serious health concern for pets, wildlife, livestock, and people, especially children. Recreational activities, such as swimming, water skiing, or diving can expose people to cyanotoxins. These toxins can enter the body through ingestion, skin contact, or inhalation and may cause the following:

- Flu-like symptoms/nausea
- Hay-fever like reactions
- Difficulty breathing
- Stomach upset (vomiting/diarrhea)
- Tingling/numbness of limbs
- Convulsions

At very high levels, cyanotoxins may cause death. Anyone with symptoms should seek medical attention quickly. If your pet comes into contact with a HAB, immediately consult a veterinarian.

