

PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY FROM HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Stay healthy around harmful algae with these simple steps!

THE HARMFUL ALGAE AND HEALTH CONNECTION

Wisconsin has more than 15,000 lakes and rivers that are home to many organisms, including algae.

In Wisconsin, algal blooms usually happen between mid-June and mid-September.

Take these important steps to protect your health and that of your family if you come across a harmful algal bloom.

WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- **Know what an algal bloom looks like.** Blue-green algae blooms can appear overnight. They can be fluorescent blue, green, white, red, or brown, and may look like thick paint or pea soup floating on the water.
- **Look for beach notices.** Be sure to check beach postings and water quality notices before you or your pet go swimming. You can be exposed while swimming by inhaling water spray or just being near a bloom.
- **Watch where your pets play.** If your pet does come into contact with blue-green algae, immediately wash them off with clean water—don't let them lick it off their fur.
- **When in doubt, stay out!** If you waded into water up to your knees and cannot see your feet, the amount of algae could be unsafe.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH A BLOOM

Rinse off.



Pro tip: Shower yourself and rinse off your pet immediately, and clean all gear after use.

Get medical treatment.



Pro tip: If you think you, your pet, or your livestock might have been poisoned by algal toxins, get medical help.

Call the poison center.



Pro tip: If you are experiencing symptoms, call the Wisconsin Poison Center (800-222-1222).

For more tips, view the full toolkit at:

WWW.DHS.WISCONSIN.GOV/CLIMATE

WISCONSIN CLIMATE AND HEALTH PROGRAM
Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health

www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/climate | JANUARY 2018 | dhsclimate@wi.gov

Department of Health Services | Division of Public Health | P-07078

