



NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: September 26, 2017

BLUE-GREEN ALGAE IN LAKE McQUABY

NIPISSING, ON – The Health Unit would like to advise the public that blue-green algae has been found in Lake McQuaby.

Because of the blue-green algae, immediately follow these safety measures:

- Do not use the water. This includes: drinking, cooking, bathing, brushing teeth, and water sports. Note: Using a private water system or boiling the water will NOT destroy the toxins.
- Do not swim where there is blue-green algae.
- Some toxins can build up in fish and shellfish. Do not eat the liver, kidneys and other organs. Be careful not to cut the organs when filleting. Limit the amount of fish flesh you eat.
- The blue-green algae may float or sink to the bottom of the lake and you may not see it.
- Even when blue-green algae has disappeared, toxins can remain in the water for a long time.
- The Health Unit and the District Office of the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change cannot confirm when the water is safe to use.

You can find out more about blue-green algae at myhealthunit.ca. Call the Health Unit at 705-474-1400, ext. 2400 or 1-800-563-2808.

Quick Facts

- Cyanobacteria, also called blue-green algae or ‘pond scum’, are not really algae, but tiny bacteria.
- Although usually hard to see, during hot weather they can grow rapidly to form a large mass, called a bloom. Blooms continually change and are difficult to predict. Wind, temperature or sunlight could change where the bloom is located in the water.
- Dense blue-green algae blooms may make the water look bluish-green, or like green pea soup or turquoise paint. Very dense blooms may form solid-looking clumps.
- Fresh blooms often smell like newly mown grass, while older blooms may smell like rotting garbage.

- Even when a bloom has disappeared, toxins can persist in water bodies for a long time. Toxins can irritate the skin and, if swallowed, cause diarrhea and vomiting. At high enough levels, the toxins may cause liver and nervous system damage.
- If skin contact does occur, wash with soap and water or rinse thoroughly with clean water to remove algae.

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Media Inquiries Only

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