

Harmful Algal Blooms

What are Cyanobacteria?

Cyanobacteria are commonly referred to as blue-green algae. They occur naturally in waters used for recreation, fishing, and drinking water. Under certain circumstances, these algae may grow rapidly to form dense accumulations known as blooms. When blooms are formed by toxin-producing bacteria, it is generally referred to as a Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB). These blooms are considered harmful because they can produce irritants and/or toxins, called cyanotoxins, which can pose health risks to humans and animals.



What Should You Do if You See a potential HAB?



For more information please visit <https://epd.georgia.gov/harmful-algal-blooms>

- If you see a bloom in a lake or reservoir, keep children and pets away from the water and limit recreational activities on the water. Avoid contact with the water that is discolored; do not swim or wade through algal scums. Avoid playing fetch with pets near algal blooms (or suspected algal blooms), as the pet may jump into the water to get the toy or stick and become exposed to toxins.
- If you or your animals come into contact with a blue-green algal bloom, wash with fresh water and soap after skin contact, and avoid swallowing or inhaling water. Wash animals' fur thoroughly before allowing them to groom themselves.
- Do not drink, cook, or shower with untreated water from lakes, ponds, or streams.
- Do not drive your boat, water ski or jet ski through the bloom.
- Avoid exposure to irrigation water drawn from untreated sources.
- Do not fish from lakes, ponds or rivers where algal scum is present.
- If you begin to exhibit any of the symptoms listed above, contact your healthcare provider and be sure to mention the possibility of exposure to algal toxins as you were in or around water.

Not Blue-Green Algae

Pollen



Duckweed



Macrophyte

