

What are Blue-Green Algae?

They are not actually algae, but a colony forming single-celled bacteria that grows in sunlight known as cyanobacteria.

What does it look like?

Blooms may appear as large scummy mats or streaks on the surface of lakes and rivers, and are sometimes toxic.

They tend to be green to blue-green in color, but can also be reddish-purple or brown.

Are they dangerous?

- Some varieties are capable of producing toxins.
- Exposure can produce rashes and blisters to harmful effects on the liver and nervous system, sore throats, headaches, muscular and joint pain, gastrointestinal symptoms and asthmatic reactions.

Can they harm my pet?

Yes. Dogs swimming in or drinking water covered with a bloom can suffer near fatal or fatal consequences.

What do I do if I get exposed?

If you think you are experiencing symptoms related to exposure, ***contact your doctor.***

How can I prevent exposure?

- If you see a bloom, stay out of the water (blooms are ugly and smelly, and will discourage entry).
- Avoid going through patches of blue-green algae on water-skis or Jet Skis®.



Bernie's Beach

How do we get rid of it?

Unfortunately not very easily.

- It comes and goes with wind and currents.
- There are no quick fixes. Chemicals can kill it, but dying blooms release toxins.
- Reducing fertilizer run-off from lawns and farms helps.



Boat Launch, Kegonsa State Park

Additional Information

- Current Beach Conditions: www.publichealthmdc.com/beaches
- CDC: www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab
- Poison Information Hotline: 800-222-1222

Other questions?

- Public Health Madison & Dane County: (608) 266-4821



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Blue-Green Algae

What You Need To Know



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