

NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release: August 26th, 2016

BLUE-GREEN ALGAE IN WEST NIPISSING

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit advises that a bloom of blue-green algae was detected in our district in the West Arm of Lake Nipissing in the Municipality of West Nipissing. The geographic coordinates are 46.22919 and -80.30964. The Health Unit advises residents and visitors near this area to take the following precautions immediately:

- Owners of private water systems should avoid using the water from the lake for drinking, cooking and bathing. Use another source of water for these purposes. NOTE: Boiling the water or using home water treatment devices **will NOT** destroy the toxins.
- Avoid swimming and other water sport activities that could increase the risk of algae material and toxins contacting your skin or being swallowed.
- Avoid using water from the lake for livestock or pets.
- Some toxins produced by cyanobacteria accumulate in the tissues of fish and shellfish, particularly in the guts including the liver, kidney, etc. We do not know if eating fish exposed to the toxins is a concern. It may depend on how much you eat and how severe the cyanobacteria bloom is. Be careful if you eat fish caught in water where cyanobacteria blooms occur. Do not eat the liver, kidneys and other organs of fish caught. Do not cut the organs when filleting.

These precautions are effective immediately. While the blue-green algae may not show the presence of toxins, there is always the risk that toxins could be produced. We cannot determine the extent of the affected area as it depends on the characteristics of the site such as prevailing wind and water flow directions.

Resorts situated in the vicinity that draw their water from wells are not affected by this.

Quick Facts

- Blue-green algae, known as ‘pond scum’, are primitive microscopic bacteria that live in fresh water. They are usually hard to see, but during hot weather, they can rapidly grow to form a large mass, called a bloom.
- 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.
- Even when a bloom has disappeared, toxins can persist in water bodies for a long time. Toxins can irritate the skin and, if ingested, 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.

Media Inquiries

John Mitchell, Acting Communications Coordinator

P: 705-474-1400, ext. 2246 or 1-800-563-2808

E: communications@nbpsdhu.ca

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