

## Protect People and Pets

- Avoid exposure to water experiencing a harmful algal bloom. Take extra precautions to ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water. Keep dogs on a leash.
- Do not consume water with a blue-green algae bloom. Neither boiling nor disinfecting removes blue-green algae toxins from water.



- If fish are known to have been exposed to a blue-green algae bloom, only consume the fillet portion. Toxins produced by blue-green algae can accumulate in the organs of fish (remove the fat, organs, and skin). Wash hands after handling. The risk associated with consuming fish caught in waters with a blue-green algae bloom is unknown.

## Stay Informed

Information about current blooms and any related health advisories is posted at [www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae).

**If you observe a blue-green algae bloom, contact your DEQ regional office.**

## For More Information

### Idaho Department of Environmental Quality

#### State Office

1410 N. Hilton  
Boise, ID 83706  
(208) 373-0502

#### Regional Offices

##### Boise

1445 N. Orchard  
Boise, ID 83706  
(208) 373-0550  
toll-free: (888) 800-3480

##### Coeur d'Alene

2110 Ironwood Parkway  
Coeur d'Alene, ID 83814  
(208) 769-1422  
toll-free: (877) 370-0017

##### Idaho Falls

900 N. Skyline, Suite B  
Idaho Falls, ID 83402  
(208) 528-2650  
toll-free: (800) 232-4635

##### Lewiston

1118 F Street  
Lewiston, ID 83501  
(208) 799-4370  
toll-free: (877) 541-3304

##### Pocatello

444 Hospital Way #300  
Pocatello, ID 83201  
(208) 236-6160  
toll-free: (888) 655-6160

##### Twin Falls

650 Addison Ave. W,  
Suite 110  
Twin Falls, ID 83301  
(208) 736-2190  
toll-free: (800) 270-1663

#### Web Resources:

Idaho Department of Environmental Quality:  
[www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae](http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae)

Idaho Department of Health and Welfare:  
[www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov](http://www.healthandwelfare.idaho.gov)

United States Environmental Protection Agency:  
[www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanobacteriacyanotoxins](http://www.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/cyanobacteriacyanotoxins)



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# Harmful Algal Blooms



Know what to look for when you're out on the water this summer and how to protect yourself if you come across a bloom.



Idaho Department of  
Environmental Quality  
[www.deq.idaho.gov](http://www.deq.idaho.gov)



## What are blue-green algae?

Blue-green algae are not algae at all but are photosynthetic bacteria, also known as cyanobacteria. However, these tiny organisms found in water are commonly referred to as blue-green algae. Most types of algae are beneficial, including blue-green algae during normal conditions; they produce oxygen and food for animals that live in the water.



Blue-green algae growth is influenced by a variety of environmental conditions including temperature, flow, nutrient levels, light, weather, vertical mixing in the water column, and pH levels. Various species thrive under their own unique conditions and produce a variety of toxins.



## What is a harmful algal bloom (HAB)?

Blue-green algae occur naturally and are often part of a healthy aquatic community, but they typically exist in numbers too small to cause problems. However, under certain conditions (such as an increase in water temperature and available nutrients) algae can proliferate, causing a blue-green bloom.

Blooms can vary in appearance, sometimes looking like mats, foam, spilled paint, or surface scum. These algal blooms sometimes change the color of the water. The blooms are most commonly blue-green in Idaho but can range in color from blue and bright green to brown and red. Some blooms produce a foul odor.

*Not all blooms are toxic, but when toxic harmful algal blooms do occur, they present a health risk to humans, pets, and livestock.*



## Why are HABs a concern?

Exposure to the toxins of a HAB can be a serious health concern for pets, wildlife, and people, especially children. People can be exposed during recreational activities such as swimming, water skiing, or diving. Exposure can occur from ingestion, skin contact, or inhalation, resulting in a range of health effects from skin irritation and stomach upset to neurotoxic effects and, at very high levels, possible death. Symptoms in humans are rare; anyone with symptoms should seek medical attention.



Animals such as dogs, cats, birds, and livestock exposed to HABs may exhibit symptoms and conditions such as:

- Weakness
- Staggering
- Difficulty breathing
- Liver poisoning
- Convulsions

Animals exposed to HABs may die within a few hours. HABs can also kill fish that live in water with HABs. If you suspect your pet has come into contact with a HAB, consult a veterinarian right away.