



PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE

Re: Blue Green Algae

An algal bloom has been observed in Bear Lake. A bloom is characterized by a pea green tint to the water, often referred to as the consistency of paint, or scum floating on the surface. Blue green algae is naturally occurring in the environment. Use of fertilizer and/or pesticides within a lake's watershed is suspected to increase the severity of algal blooms. The severity of a bloom will fluctuate over the course of a day, depending on wind speed, direction and light intensity.

The following actions can be taken to reduce health risks commonly associated with blooms:

- Avoid areas with visible algae and/or scums. Direct contact and ingestion are associated with the greatest health risk.
- If no scums are visible, but water shows a strong greenish discoloration such that you cannot see your feet when standing knee deep (after sediment has settled) avoid bathing, immersion of head, and/or ingestion.
- Avoid waterskiing in visible scums or waters with a strong greenish coloration as described above because of the potentially substantial risk of exposure to aerosols.
- If sailing, sailboarding or undertaking any other activity likely to involve accidental immersion, wear clothing that is loose fitting in the openings. Use of wet suits for water sports may result in greater risk of rashes, as the algal material trapped in the wet suit will be in contact with the skin for longer periods of time.
- After coming ashore, shower or wash to remove algal material.

Additional information about algae blooms is available online at www.muskegonhealth.net. In addition, a posting has been sent along with this notice, feel free to put this up where the public can access the information.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Michigan Department of Environmental Quality have not set a standard for Blue Green Algae. This notice is to provide information only. If you have questions or concerns pertaining to this or other environmental health issues, please feel free to contact me at 724-6208.

Sincerely,
Victoria Webster, R.S., M.P.A.
Environmental Health Supervisor