



Department of Health
Department of Natural Resources
Environmental Protection Agency

Harmful Algal Blooms

BE AWARE

ohioalgaeinfo.com



What is a Harmful Algal Bloom?

A harmful algal bloom (HAB) is a large growth of bacteria that can produce cyanotoxins. These cyanotoxins produced by blue green algae may affect the liver, nervous system and/or skin.



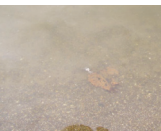
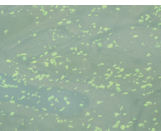
How dangerous are HABs?

If you touch HABs, swallow water with HAB cyanotoxins or breathe in water droplets, you could have diarrhea or vomiting, get a rash, have an allergic reaction, get a stomach ache, or feel dizzy or light-headed. HABs also are dangerous for pets.



How will I know if there is a HAB?

HABs have different colors and looks. Some colors are green, blue-green, brown, black, white, purple, red and black. They can look like film, crust or puff balls at the surface. They also may look like grass clippings or dots in the water. Some HABs look like spilled paint, pea soup, foam, wool, streaks or green cottage cheese curd.



Always look for HABs before going in the water. Check for HAB advisories on ohioalgaeinfo.com and the Ohio Department of Health Beach Guard web page.



What should I do if I see a HAB?

- Avoid prolonged exposure
- Follow HAB advisories post at state park beaches and boat ramps
- Do not let your children or pets play in HAB debris on the shore.
- After swimming or wading in lake water, even where no HABs are visible, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible.
- Never swallow any lake or river water, whether you see HABs or not.
- Do not let pets lick HAB material from their fur or eat HAB material.
- Do not drink or cook with lake water.
- See a doctor if you or your children might be ill from HABs. If your pet appears ill, contact your veterinarian. Report any suspected illness from HABs to your local health district.

For more information on possible health effects of HABs, visit www.odh.ohio.gov/odhprograms/eh/HABs/algalblooms.aspx

What about fishing and other activities?

If you plan to eat the fish you catch, remove the guts and liver, and rinse fillets in tap water before eating.

Other activities near the water such as camping, picnicking, biking and hiking are safe. If you are picnicking, wash your hands before eating if you have had contact with lake water or shore debris.

For general HAB information and forms to report HAB locations

ohioalgaefinfo.com

For current beach advisories, go to
odh.ohio.gov/healthybeaches