

The risks of blue-green algae

[The Bugle-Observer](#) [Woodstock, N.B] 17 July 2012: A.4.

New Brunswickers are advised to be aware of the potential health risks posed by some algal blooms in lakes and other bodies of water.

"Algae blooms can occur in waters during the summer or early fall," said Dr. Eilish Cleary, New Brunswick's chief medical officer of health. "While not all algae blooms are problematic, blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, can produce microcystin toxins, which may cause skin, eye and throat irritation and may lead to more serious health effects if consumed."

Since blue-green algae blooms can be unpredictable, the Department of Health encourages the public to be cautious while enjoying the outdoors:

- Before entering a body of water, take note of its quality and, where a blue-green algae bloom is suspected, (paint-like scum and/or blue/green or other discoloured water) avoid swimming, water-skiing or other recreational activities;
- Do not consume water where blue-green algae blooms are found even after boiling because boiling does not remove the toxins; and
- Fish caught from water where blue-green algae blooms are present should have all its organs removed and be thoroughly rinsed with potable water before it is cooked and consumed.

Young children and those with skin conditions may be particularly vulnerable. Blue-green algae can be fatal to pets and livestock.

The departments of Health and Environment and Local Government are working together to ensure that reported or suspected blooms are evaluated and that advisories are posted where appropriate.

Suspected algae blooms should be reported to the nearest Department of Environment and Local Government regional office.

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