

# PROTECTING YOUR FAMILY FROM HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

Stay healthy around harmful algae with these simple steps!

## THE HARMFUL ALGAE AND HEALTH CONNECTION

Wisconsin has more than 15,000 lakes and rivers that are home to many organisms, including algae.

In Wisconsin, algal blooms usually happen between mid-June and mid-September.

Take these important steps to protect your health and that of your family if you come across a harmful algal bloom.

## WAYS TO PROTECT YOURSELF

- **Know what an algal bloom looks like.** Blue-green algae blooms can appear overnight. They can be fluorescent blue, green, white, red, or brown, and may look like thick paint or pea soup floating on the water.
- **Look for beach notices.** Be sure to check beach postings and water quality notices before you or your pet go swimming. You can be exposed while swimming by inhaling water spray or just being near a bloom.
- **Watch where your pets play.** If your pet does come into contact with blue-green algae, immediately wash them off with clean water—don't let them lick it off their fur.
- **When in doubt, stay out!** If you wade into water up to your knees and cannot see your feet, the amount of algae could be unsafe.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU COME IN CONTACT WITH A BLOOM

Rinse off.



Pro tip: Shower yourself and rinse off your pet immediately, and clean all gear after use.

Get medical treatment.



Pro tip: If you think you, your pet, or your livestock might have been poisoned by algal toxins, get medical help.

Call the poison center.



Pro tip: If you are experiencing symptoms, call the Wisconsin Poison Center (800-222-1222).

For more tips, view the full toolkit at:

[WWW.DHS.WISCONSIN.GOV/CLIMATE](http://WWW.DHS.WISCONSIN.GOV/CLIMATE)

WISCONSIN CLIMATE AND HEALTH PROGRAM  
Bureau of Environmental and Occupational Health

[www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/climate](http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/climate) | JANUARY 2018 | [dhsclimate@wi.gov](mailto:dhsclimate@wi.gov)

Department of Health Services | Division of Public Health | P-02078

