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Confirmed Blue-Green Algae Press Release: 8/8/2016

For Immediate Release



When in Doubt, Stay Out!

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources has confirmed the presence of blue-green algae in Lake Petenwell, Castle Rock Lake, Lake Sherwood, Lake Camelot, and Lake Arrowhead in Adams County. Illnesses in humans and animals potentially related to blue-green algae in these lakes have been reported as well.

“Swimming in or swallowing water with high levels of blue-green algae presents health risks to individuals,” says Sarah Grosshuesch, Adams County Health Officer. “Awareness and common sense is the key. People and their pets should avoid swimming where water looks like pea soup or smells foul.” All recreation swimmers and boaters are warned to avoid direct contact with the affected lake areas.

Algae blooms take on many different appearances and colors. They can look like pea soup or spilled paint on the surface of the water. Although the color is usually blue-green the algae blooms can range from blue to red in color. There is currently no treatment for blue-green algae blooms so it is best to stay out of the water until the bloom dissipates on its own. Although many adults will avoid swimming in such conditions, children and pets are less conscious of where they chose to swim. It is important to protect children and pets from the threat of blue-green algae by making sure they avoid contaminated waters.

According to the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), adverse human health effects include difficulty breathing, stomach and intestinal issues such as vomiting and diarrhea, skin irritation, loss of appetite, nausea, or numbness or tingling of the hands and/or feet. These symptoms can show up minutes to hours after exposure. Pets, especially dogs, can experience symptoms such as fatigue, difficulty breathing, vomiting, convulsions, and even death following exposure to blue-green algae. Health officials recommend if you or your pets have been exposed to blue-green algae and are experiencing any of these symptoms to seek medical or veterinary attention.

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources offers tips to protect you and your family:

- Do not swim in water that looks like "pea soup", green or blue paint, or that has a scum layer or puffy blobs floating on the surface
- Do not boat, water ski, etc. over such water (people can be exposed through inhalation of aerosolized water droplets)
- Do not let children play with scum layers, even from shore
- Do not let pets or livestock swim in, or drink, waters experiencing blue-green algae blooms
- Do not treat surface waters that are experiencing blue-green algae blooms with any herbicide or algacide-- toxins are released into the water when blue-green algae cells die

- In general, avoid swimming in areas where you cannot see your feet in knee-deep water
- Always take a shower after coming into contact with any surface water (whether or not a blue-green algae bloom appears to be present; surface waters may contain other species of potentially harmful bacteria and viruses)

If you think you, a family member, or pet developed an illness after exposure to blue-green algae, please report the illness to the Wisconsin Division of Public Health by filling out an online survey at <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/bg-algae/index.htm> or calling (608) 266-1120.

For more information or questions on Blue-Green Algae, see contact information below:

Adams County Health and Human Services Division of Public Health
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