

Toxic Algae

You can help prevent toxic algae blooms.

Animal waste, human waste and fertilizers contain nutrients that algae need to grow.

- Reduce fertilizer use.
- Maintain your septic system, and have it inspected regularly.
- Pick up after your pets, don't feed waterfowl and keep livestock away from the water.
- Plant native plants between your yard and the water to reduce runoff and prevent erosion.

Help us track algae blooms.

Toxic algae move freely in lakes making it difficult for us to fully see current conditions.

- We want people who live on or frequently visit Pierce County lakes to help. Let us know when there is a potential concern with toxic algae and when it's no longer there.
- Our staff can show you how to identify toxic algae. We encourage your open communication and questions about lake conditions.

Get involved with our Toxic Algae Watch Volunteer Group.

Email ltuttle@tpchd.org to sign up.

Get surface water advisories by email.

Go to www.tpchd.org, to sign up for Public Health eNews, check the lake advisories subject box and fill in your contact information.

What we do.

We sample locations with potential toxic algae concerns and issue advisories when needed.



See more at www.tpchd.org/toxicalgae

Questions?

Contact algae@tpchd.org or (253) 798-6470.

What you need to know
to stay safe in Pierce
County Lakes.

Keep Your Family and Pets Safe.

When in doubt, stay out!

What is toxic algae?

Toxic algae, or cyanobacteria, are blue-green algae that are naturally present in fresh water. In the right conditions, these algae can multiply quickly and form large blooms that can be dangerous for people and pets.

Many blooms float to the surface and form very obvious scum, but wind and weather can quickly change the amount and location of algae. When in doubt, stay out!

It can make you and your pets sick.

Touching or drinking water with toxic algae can make people very sick. Kids and pets are at even greater risk because they have smaller bodies and are more likely to swallow the water.

Talk to a doctor if you have vomiting, dizziness, diarrhea, skin or eye rash or difficulty breathing after contact with surface water.

Contact us after you talk to a doctor.



What does toxic algae look like?

Toxic algae blooms vary in appearance. Colors can include green, turquoise, red, yellow, brown or white. Blooms can occur as scums, streaks or clumps in the water. Here are some of the most common forms:

Scums (like pea soup or paint)



Streaks (colored bands on the water surface)



Specks or clumps (free-floating or attached to the bottom)



Can I eat fish from water with toxic algae?

Avoid eating fish from areas with visible algae. Always clean fish well and discard guts.

What should I do if I see an algae bloom?

- Don't drink lake water.
- Don't play in water with visible algae.
- Keep your family and animals away.
- Tell us.

If the area is open to the public and isn't already posted with a Health Department sign, please call us at (253) 798-6470.