

Toxic Algae Caution for Lake Minterwood

July 26, 2019



Toxin levels have decreased

Toxin levels have gone down on Lake Minterwood. Don't swim in areas where you can see scum. When in doubt, stay out.

What are toxic algae?

Toxic algae, also known as cyanobacteria, occur naturally in lakes. They can produce toxins that make people, pets, and animals sick.

How can you spot toxic algae?

Toxic algae can form a scum and look like green pea soup. They can also look streaky, be dispersed in the water column, or form clumps. Algae can have different colors, most often green but also brown, red, and blueish. See examples in our [brochure](#). Wind and weather conditions can change the amount and location of algae.

When in doubt, stay out.

What are the symptoms?

- Muscle weakness.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Nausea.

See your medical provider if you have come into contact with water and have any of these symptoms. Little children are most at risk since they have small bodies and are likely to ingest water.

Skin contact with toxic algae can cause irritation or a rash. This is a different rash than that caused by [Swimmer's Itch](#).

Toxic Algae Warning for Lake Minterwood

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How can toxic algae affect my pets?

Pets are at great risk. They have small bodies and are more likely to ingest larger amounts of toxic algae. They drink water with toxic algae and lick their fur. Take your pet to the vet when it shows any of these symptoms.

- Lethargy.
- Vomiting.
- Diarrhea.
- Convulsions.
- Difficulty breathing.
- General weakness.

What should I do if exposed to toxic algae?

You can get sick within minutes to hours of exposure. Rinse off anyone or any pets exposed to toxic algae immediately. Monitor for signs of illness and seek medical treatment if symptoms occur. For exposed pets, keep them from licking their fur to groom.

Can I eat fish from toxic algae contaminated water?

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

What should I do if I see an algal bloom?

- Don't drink lake water.
- Don't swim or waterski in areas with visible algae.
- Keep pets and livestock away.

When in doubt, stay out!

What causes toxic algae blooms?

Toxic algae need light, the right temperature, and nutrients. People can influence the amount of nutrients in the water. Reduce the amount of fertilizers, maintain your septic system, put your pet waste into the trash.

Questions? Contact Chrissy Cooley at (253) 278-1404 or ccooley@tpchd.org or visit www.tpchd.org/toxicalgae to learn more.