

## Help prevent toxic algae blooms.

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

- 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.

Get involved with our Toxic Algae Watch volunteer group. Contact Lindsay at [ltuttle@tpchd.org](mailto:ltuttle@tpchd.org) to sign up.

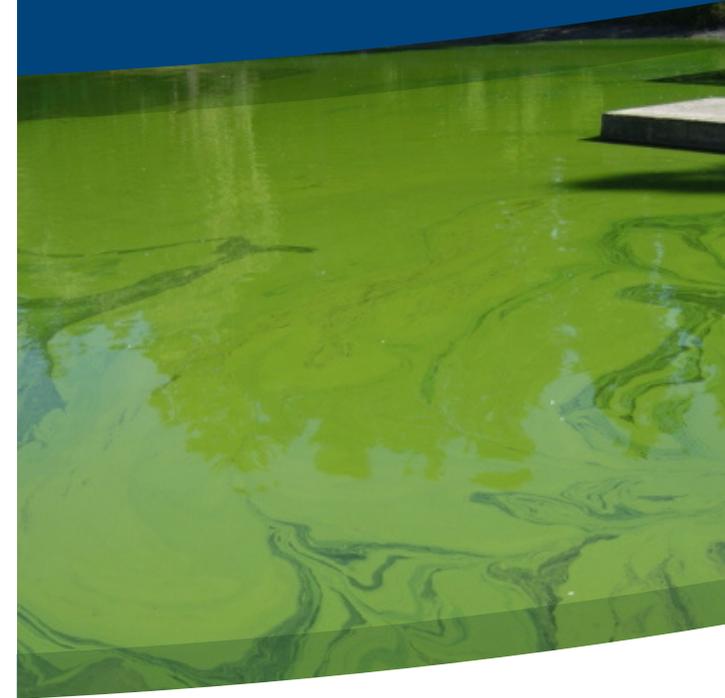
## Get surface water advisories by email.

- Sign up for notifications at <https://www.tpchd.org/i-want-to-/about-the-health-department/sign-up-for-notifications>
- Fill in your information.
- Check the Surface Water and Shellfish Advisories box.
- Select Submit.

## Questions?

Contact our Surface Water team at [algae@tpchd.org](mailto:algae@tpchd.org) or (253) 798-6470.

# Toxic Algae



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, naturally present in fresh water. In the right conditions, these algae can multiply quickly and form large blooms 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.

## 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 water.

Talk to a doctor if

you have vomiting, dizziness, diarrhea, skin or eye rash or difficulty breathing after contact with surface water.

Call us after you talk to a doctor.

## What does toxic algae look like?

Toxic algae blooms vary in appearance from green, turquoise, red, yellow, brown or white. Blooms can look like scum, streaks or clumps in the water.

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 the 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.