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How Can I Identify a Blue-Green Algae Bloom?

There has been a dramatic increase in blue green algae blooms in Ontario in recent years. As a result many lakefront property owners are very concerned when they see blooms or floating masses which they think could be a bloom. To alleviate unnecessary concerns and to share important information The Coalition of Haliburton Property Owners Associations is providing this fact sheet on how to identify blue green algae blooms and what to do if you do spot one (info on reverse of this page)

From Saskatchewan Ministry of Agriculture

Blue-green algae will have a shimmering, blue-green colour. It may also have a foamy sheen-like appearance, which looks like spilled paint floating on top of the water. Heavy blooms appear like a solid shimmering blue-green sheen across the water's surface, or have an appearance and consistency similar to pea soup. A bloom is not small specs it is a larger mass. It may also smell like raw sewage



Close up picture – Source University of Alberta



What To Do If You Spot A Blue Green Algae Bloom



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What To Do If You Spot a Blue Green Algae Bloom

1. Notify the Ministry of the Environment Spills Action Centre at 1-800-268-6060.
2. Notify your Lake Association so that your Association can let all the members on the lake know
3. Tell your neighbours
4. **Do Not**
 - a. Swim in the lake
 - b. Let pets or any animals swim or drink from the lake
5. **Do Not** allow water from the lake to enter your house/cottage
 - i. Most water treatment systems will not safely treat water with a blue green algae bloom
 - ii. Boiling or chlorinating the water can release toxins into the air
 - iii. Even UV filters will not safely treat water which contains a blue green algae bloom
6. Stop using the water and seek medical attention if symptoms such as skin, eye or throat irritation, allergic reactions or breathing difficulties occur while in contact with untreated surface waters.
7. Do not eat fish caught in the water body.

Where to get more information:

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/blue-green-algae>