



*Distribution: Residents of Pleasant Lake in Manchester, Michigan.
Thank you to the Pleasant Lake Property Owners Association for sharing this information.*

Advisory for Harmful Algal Bloom in Pleasant Lake
Residents, visitors and pets advised to avoid touching algae or scum

YPSILANTI, Mich., May 18, 2023 – The Washtenaw County Health Department (WCHD) is alerting residents that a public health advisory is in effect for a harmful algal bloom (HAB) in Pleasant Lake in Manchester, Michigan.

People and pets should avoid direct body contact with scums in the lake, water that is green or blue-green, or water that looks like it has a green sheen or spilled paint on its surface. People and pets should also avoid swallowing the lake water.

Different types of naturally occurring algal blooms may be seen on lakes and rivers. Most are not harmful. However, some are made of cyanobacteria that have the ability to produce toxins, including microcystin. Because these algal blooms may contain toxins, the water is considered to have a harmful algal bloom (HAB).

Earlier this month, a Pleasant Lake resident notified the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) of a suspected HAB when they observed algae on the lake and noted that a pet which had recently been in the lake had become ill. ELGE staff conducted a site visit and performed a field test on the water, which resulted in an estimated level of microcystin toxin above 10 ppb. This is above the EPA recommendation of 8 ppb microcystin in recreational water.

Pleasant Lake, like other lakes in our area, has had a history of algal blooms and microcystin being present. Given how quickly an algal bloom may form, move, or disappear, WCHD recommends continuing to take precautions throughout the recreational water season.

For your safety:

- You can swim in the water but stay away from water that has scums or mats, looks like spilled paint, or has colored streaks. To help identify a HAB and other lake conditions mistaken for HABs, visit the [HAB Picture Guide](http://www.michigan.gov/habs) at www.michigan.gov/habs.
- You can water ski, boat, and tube but use caution in areas with visible algal scums. Breathing in water droplets with algae from the boat spray may cause nose and throat irritation.
- Keep children and pets away from algae in the water or on the shore.
- Avoid swallowing any lake or river water, whether you see HABs or not.
- Do not cook with or drink water from lakes, ponds, or rivers.
- Do not let pets or livestock drink the water, eat scum on the shore, or lick HAB material from their fur.
- After swimming or wading, even where no HABs are visible, rinse people and pets off with fresh water as soon as possible.
- When in doubt, keep people and pets out of the water.
- See a doctor if you or your children become ill after exposure to lake water. If your pet appears ill, contact your veterinarian.

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Algal Blooms

Although most blooms are green algae and not harmful, there are some that are a type of **cyanobacteria** that have the ability to produce toxins – and can result in a HAB. Swallowing large amounts of water containing cyanotoxins while swimming, wading, or playing in the water may cause flu-like symptoms, gastrointestinal illness, or neurotoxic symptoms. These may include abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, numbness, headaches, dizziness, or difficulty breathing. Swallowing large amounts of cyanotoxins can harm the liver or kidneys. Skin contact may cause rashes, blisters, or hives.

What causes HABs to form?

Factors that can contribute to HABs include sunlight; low-water or low-flow conditions; calm water; warmer temperatures; and excess nutrients (phosphorus or nitrogen). The primary sources of nutrient pollution are runoff of fertilizers, animal manure, sewage treatment plant discharges, storm water runoff, car and power plant emissions, and failing septic systems.

More Information

The Michigan Departments of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) and Health and Human Services (DHHS) sample for HABs on a limited basis and work with local health departments to protect the public when toxins are discovered; however, some areas affected by HABs may go undetected. Suspicious-looking algae can be reported to EGLE by calling the Environmental Assistance Center at 1-800-662-9278 or sending an e-mail to AlgaeBloom@Michigan.gov. See more at michigan.gov/habs.

Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County Health Department promotes health and works to prevent disease and injury in our community. Our mission is to assure, in partnership with the community, the conditions necessary for people to live healthy lives through prevention and protection programs. Visit us at washtenaw.org/health or call 734-544-6700.

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