

## News release

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### **Health advisory issued for Blue Lake**

#### ***High algae levels found at Blue Lake in Multnomah County***

A health advisory is being issued today based on visual observation of scum on Blue Lake, located just outside Wood Village north of Interstate 84 in Multnomah County.

Water monitoring is underway to determine whether blue-green algae cells present might produce cyanotoxins harmful to humans and animals. Swallowing or inhaling water droplets, as well as skin contact with water, should be avoided.

Drinking water directly from Blue Lake is especially dangerous. Oregon Public Health officials advise campers and other Blue Lake visitors that toxins cannot be removed by boiling, filtering or treating the water with camping-style filters.

People who draw in-home water directly from Blue Lake are advised to use an alternative water source because private treatment systems are not proven effective in removing algae toxins. However, public drinking water systems can reduce algae toxins through proper filtration and disinfection. If people on public water systems have questions about treatment and testing, they should contact their water supplier.

(more)

Oregon health officials recommend that people who choose to eat fish from waters where algae blooms are present should remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking, because toxins are more likely to collect in these tissues. Public health officials also advise that people should not eat freshwater clams or mussels from Blue Lake. Crayfish muscle can be eaten, but internal organs and liquid fat should be discarded.

Exposure to toxins can produce symptoms of numbness, tingling and dizziness that can lead to difficulty breathing or heart problems and require immediate medical attention. Symptoms of skin irritation, weakness, diarrhea, nausea, cramps and fainting should also receive medical attention if they persist or worsen. Children and pets are particularly susceptible.

The public will be advised when the concern no longer exists.

With proper precautions to avoid water contact, people are encouraged to visit Blue Lake and enjoy activities such as camping, hiking, biking, picnicking, fishing and bird watching. Boating is safe as long as speeds do not create excessive water spray, which could lead to inhalation risk.

For local information, contact Metro Parks at 503-665-4995, extension 0. For health information, contact the [Harmful Algae Bloom Surveillance](#) (HABS) program at 971-673-0400 or [www.healthoregon.org/hab](http://www.healthoregon.org/hab).

The HABS program maintains a current list of all health advisories on its website. To find out if an advisory has been issued or lifted for a specific water body, visit the [Harmful Algae Bloom Surveillance](#) program website and select “Check current water conditions.” You can also contact the Oregon Public Health Division toll-free information line at 1-877-290-6767.

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