

## News release

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### **Health advisory issued for Fern Ridge Reservoir** *High algae levels found at Lane County reservoir*

A health advisory is being issued today based on visual observation of scum on Fern Ridge Reservoir, located 12 miles west of Eugene off Oregon Route 126 in Lane County.

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

Drinking water directly from Fern Ridge Reservoir could be especially dangerous. Oregon Public Health officials warn campers and other Fern Ridge Reservoir 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 Fern Ridge Reservoir 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.

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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 recommend people not eat freshwater clams or mussels from Fern Ridge Reservoir. 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 at increased risk for exposure because of their size and level of activity.

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

With proper precautions to avoid water contact, people are encouraged to visit Fern Ridge Reservoir 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 lake information, contact the Lane County Parks Department at 541-682-2005. For drinking water information, contact your local drinking water treatment facility.

For health information, see the [Harmful Algae Bloom Surveillance](#) (HABS) program website at [www.healthoregon.org/hab](http://www.healthoregon.org/hab) or call 971-673-0400. Also contact the Oregon Public Health Division toll-free information line at 1-877-290-6767 or Lane County Health Department at 541-682-3636.

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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 [www.healthoregon.org/hab](http://www.healthoregon.org/hab) and select “Check current water conditions.”

The Harmful Algae Bloom Surveillance program is funded through September 2013 by a grant from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

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