

Hello—

I'm the statewide blue-green algae coordinator for the Department of Natural Resources and I wanted to let you know that we have received reports of blue-green algal blooms in Pelican Lake and Lake Nokomis.

This is the time of year when warm lake water causes blue-green algal blooms to form. Jim Kreitlow, who works in the DNR's Rhinelander office, received the attached photograph of the bloom on Pelican Lake yesterday and identified a bloom sample as containing 6 different blue-green algal species. I received a call about the Lake Nokomis bloom from a lake homeowner on Monday morning. Her description of lake conditions was consistent with the appearance of a blue-green algal bloom, with a light scum present that became mixed into the water over the weekend, either by weather conditions or through boating disturbance.

Do you ever post advisory signs at public access points on the lakes? We have a [sample advisory sign](#) available on our website. At lakes where blooms are known to recur, it may be advisable to laminate the signs and post them throughout the summer, so people will know to be on the lookout for blue-green algal blooms.

The main risk for illness is from ingesting blue-green algae by swallowing water or inhaling water droplets (such as while water skiing or tubing). Some people may also experience dermal irritation such as rashes from skin exposure to blue-green algae. For a good rule of thumb, if you can wade knee-deep into water (without disturbing the sediment) and cannot see your feet because the water is green and/or opaque, you should stay out. Algae cell densities are high enough that if the algae are producing toxins, you could become ill from swallowing water or inhaling water droplets, or have irritation from skin exposure. Small children and animals should always be kept away from water in these conditions. Blue-green algae can't always produce toxins and even if they can, they don't produce toxins all the time. However, you can't tell if they are producing toxins just by looking at a bloom, so avoiding contact with high levels of algae is the best way to stay safe.

If you or your staff is unsure of what blue-green algal blooms look like, please see my [Wisconsin Lakes Partnership Convention presentation](#).

There's more information about blue-green algal blooms at <http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/bluegreenalgae/> (including a link to our YouTube video) and <http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/bluegreenalgae/>.

The Department of Natural Resources' recommendations for staying safe are:

- Do not swim in water that looks like "pea soup", green or blue paint, or that has a scum layer or puffy blobs floating on the surface.
- Do not boat, water ski, etc. over such water (people can be exposed through inhalation).
- Do not let children play with scum layers, even from shore.
- Do not let pets or livestock swim in, or drink, waters experiencing blue-green algae blooms.

- Do not treat surface waters that are experiencing blue-green algae blooms with any herbicide or algaecide-- toxins are released into the water when blue-green algae cells die.
- Always take a shower after coming into contact with any surface water (whether or not a blue-green algae bloom appears to be present; surface waters may contain other species of potentially harmful bacteria and viruses).
- Pets should be washed off immediately after swimming, before they groom.
- Always avoid swallowing untreated surface water – it may contain pathogens other than blue-green algae which could make you ill.

Please let me know if you have any questions.

Gina

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