

NEWS RELEASE

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BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOM PRESENT IN CALLANDER BAY

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit wishes to advise that a bloom of blue-green algae was detected in the municipality of Callander at the North Bay Yacht Club on Greenwood Road.

The Municipality of Callander is cooperating fully with the Ministry of the Environment and the Health Unit in terms of advice and notice to the public. The operator of Callander's water treatment plant has activated all of the appropriate steps for the safety of the municipal water supply.

While the blue-green algae may not show the presence of toxins, there is always the risk that toxins could be produced. These toxins may stay in the water for up to three weeks after the algae bloom is gone.

The Health Unit advises residents of Callander Bay and any visitors to the area to take the following precautions for three weeks after the bloom has disappeared:

- Avoid swimming and other water sport activities that could increase the risk of algae material and toxins contacting your skin or being swallowed.
- Avoid using water from Callander Bay for pets.
- Owners of private water systems should avoid using the water from Callander Bay for drinking, cooking and bathing. Use an alternate source of water for these purposes. **NOTE: Boiling the water or using home water treatment devices will NOT destroy the toxins.**

The Health Unit will provide further information as it becomes available.

Quote

"If you receive your drinking water from the Callander municipal water supply, you are not at risk because the municipal treatment process will remove blue-green algae and the toxins," said Robert A-Muhong, Manager of Environmental Health. "However, owners of private water systems should avoid using the water from Callander Bay because home treatment devices will NOT destroy the toxins."

Quick Facts

Blue-green algae, known as 'pond scum', are primitive microscopic bacteria that live in fresh water. They are usually hard to see, but during hot weather, they can rapidly grow to form a large mass, called a bloom.

Toxins can irritate the skin and, if ingested, cause diarrhea and vomiting. At high enough levels, the toxins may cause liver and nervous system damage.

If skin contact does occur, wash with soap and water or rinse thoroughly with clean water to remove algae.

Blue-green algae thrive in warm, shallow, undisturbed water that receives a lot of sunlight and is rich in phosphorus and nitrogen. Animal and human waste and fertilizers contain phosphorus and nitrogen.

DO NOT:

- Use the water for drinking, bathing, or showering.
- Allow children, pets, or livestock to swim in the water or drink the water.
- Cook with the water because food may absorb toxins from the water during cooking.
- Boil the water because boiling it may release more toxins into the water.
- Treat the water with a disinfectant like bleach. This may break open algae cells and release toxins into the water.
- Rely on water jug filtration systems, as they do not protect against the toxins.
- Eat the liver, kidneys, or other organs of fish caught in the water. Be cautious about eating the other parts of the fish caught in water where blue-green algae blooms occur.

Fact Sheets with more information about Blue-Green Algae can be found at www.healthunit.biz in the HOT TOPICS box.

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