

NEWS RELEASE

For release: August 26, 2010

BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOM PRESENT IN SEGUIN TOWNSHIP ON THE NORTH WEST SIDE OF HORSESHOE LAKE

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit wishes to advise that a bloom of blue-green algae was detected in **Seguin Township on the North West side of Horseshoe Lake between Gibraltar and Center Bay.**

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. Because the blue-green algae blooms are not anchored, they may move from one part of the lake to another through wind and water action.

The Health Unit advises residents of Seguin Township on the North West side of Horseshoe Lake and any visitors to the area to take the following precautions for three weeks after the bloom has disappeared:

- Owners of private water systems should not use the water from the **North West side of Horseshoe Lake** for drinking, cooking and bathing. Use an alternate source of water because boiling the water or using home water treatment devices **will NOT** destroy the toxins.
- 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 the water from the affected area for pets.

The Municipality of Seguin Township is cooperating fully with the Ministry of the Environment and the Health Unit in terms of advice and notice to the public. The Health Unit will provide further information as it becomes available.

Quote

“If you draw your water from the North West side of Horseshoe Lake between Gibraltar and Center Bay, we advise that you seek an alternate source of water for drinking, cooking and bathing. Homeowners who receive drinking water from ground water (wells) are not at risk.” said Robert A-Muhong, Manager of Environmental Health. “Information sheets are available at the Seguin Township Municipal office.”

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:

- Online at www.healthunit.biz in the HOT TOPICS box
- Online at www.seguin.ca
- At the Seguin Township municipal office.

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