CYANOBACTERIA FAQ

WHAT ARE CYANOBACTERIA (BLUE-GREEN ALGAE)?

Cyanobacteria are a natural part of our environment that tend to occur during warmer months. They can be found in lakes, rivers and wetlands.

Under certain conditions, they can increase in numbers to form surface blooms or benthic mats.

WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?

Surface blooms can look like scum, foam or paint streaks on the water's surface that appear blue-green, green, red or brown.

Benthic mats form along the bottom of lakes and rivers and can look like clumps of vegetation that can appear black, brown or dark green in the water, but when washed up on the shore they may appear brown or grey once they have dried. They can also be attached to rocks or aquatic vegetation or floating in the water.

WHY IS IT DANGEROUS?

Not all cyanobacteria are harmful, but some may produce toxins which can cause skin, eye and throat irritations if ingested. More serious health effects such as gastrointestinal illness can occur if toxins are consumed. These toxins can also be harmful to fish, wildlife, livestock and domestic animals.

IS IT SAFE FOR ME OR MY DOG TO SWIM IN WATER CONTAINING CYANOBACTERIA?

Always check the water before swimming. If surface blooms are present, people and dogs should avoid swimming. People should also avoid engaging in other activities (e.g. water-skiing, canoeing, paddle boarding, etc.) that may involve contact with the water.

Dogs are attracted to the odour of benthic mats and should not be permitted to eat mats or vegetation found floating in the water or along the shore, as they can be lethal if consumed.

As a precaution children and adults should not play or handle mats while wading, boating or otherwise enjoying recreational waters.

SURFACE BLOOMS

BENTHIC MATS

TO REPORT A CYANOBACTERIA BLOOM

Contact your nearest **Department of Environment and Local Government Regional Office**.

For more information on how to report a cyanobacteria bloom, visit **www.gnb.ca/algae**

New Nouveau Brunswick