**Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs)**

The California State Water Resources Control Board has announced that the occurrence of HABs appears to be increasing. This has led to an increase in the public’s concern regarding potential health impacts to humans and animals, particularly dogs. [Please review the attached fact sheet. PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF  PDF PDFPDF](https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/docs/hab_related_illness_workgroup_factsheet_final.pdf)

**What are Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs)?**

Algae are tiny, harmless organisms that live naturally in water. A harmful algae bloom (HAB) is actually made of cyanobacteria, sometimes called blue-green algae. Some cyanobacteria species create toxins that can make people and pets sick.

**Blue-Green Algae (Cyanobacteria)**

Blue-green algae poisoning is most common in pets. Symptoms, including death, can be more severe in pets because they tend to drink the water from affected lakes and reservoirs. Children and adults can experience serious injury to the liver, kidney, and nervous system if affected water is swallowed. Medical treatment should be sought immediately if a person or pet is suspected to have blue-green algae poisoning.

Cyanobacteria can be found in waterbodies throughout the United States as well as California. Common recreational water purification techniques, including camping filters, tablets, and boiling, do not remove toxins from affected water.

**One of the following signs may be posted at designated Sonoma County public beaches for educational purposes:**



***When In Doubt Stay Out***

Know the signs of an algae bloom. Don’t go in water that is foamy, scummy, thick like paint, pea-green, blue-green or brownish red.

**Healthy Water Habits**

**At all times, DHS encourages individuals** to follow healthy water habits for recreational river use:

* Do not drink river water. Do not cook or wash dishes with river water
* Wash yourself and your family with clean water after river play
* Consume fish only after removing guts and liver, and rinsing fillets in clean water. Mercury has been detected in fish from the Russian River. Check here for additional guidance regarding mercury in fish: <https://oehha.ca.gov/advisories/russian-river>
* Bring your life jacket, but leave the alcohol at home. The side effects of alcohol – impaired judgment, reduced balance, poor coordination – can be magnified by the boating environment. For additional safety tips please visit the State Parks Division of Boating and Waterways: <http://dbw.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=28711>
* Algal mats tri-fold: [Link to Document](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Main%20County%20Site/Health%20and%20Human%20Services/Health%20Services/Documents/Public%20Health/Sections/Environmental%20Health/Programs%20and%20Services/Food%20Safety%20Program/algalmatbrochure.pdf)
* Illness tracking fact sheet: [Link to document](https://sonomacounty.ca.gov/Main%20County%20Site/Health%20and%20Human%20Services/Health%20Services/Documents/Public%20Health/Sections/Environmental%20Health/Programs%20and%20Services/Freshwater%20Harmful%20Algal%20Bloom-related%20illness%20tracking%20in%20California.pdf)

**Reporting an Algae Bloom**

To report a bloom, or an animal or human illness related to a bloom, contact the **California State Water Resources Control Board** at 916-341-5357 or [email the board](mailto:CyanoHAB.Reports@waterboards.ca.gov). Or fill out this [Harmful Algal Bloom Report Form](https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/do/bloomreport.html) online.

**More Information**

Find more information about Harmful Algae Blooms (HABs) at this [HABs Frequently Asked Questions page](https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/what/index.html) from the California State Water Resources Control Board.

**Related Links**

* [Resources for Mitigating Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)](https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/resources/mitigating_habs.html)  
  Source:California Water Quality Monitoring Council
* [Are Harmful Algal Blooms Affecting Our Waters?](https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/)  
  Source: State Water Resources Control Board
* [Algal Blooms](https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DEODC/EHIB/EAS/Pages/HABs.aspx)  
  Source: California Department of Public Health.
* [California Cyanobacteria and Harmful Algal Bloom (CCHAB) Network](http://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/cyanohab_network/index.html)  
  Source: California Water Quality Monitoring Council
* [Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB)-Associated Illness](https://www.cdc.gov/habs/index.html)  
  Source: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
* To Report Harmful Algal Blooms<https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/monitoring_council/cyanohab_network/index.html>
* For more information on the California Guidance Response for Harmful Algal Blooms (CCHAB):<https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/resources/habs_response.html>
* For more information on the CCHAB Trigger levels:  
  <https://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/resources/habs_response.html>