

PROTECTING YOUR PETS

from blue-green algae (cyanobacteria)

What is it and what does it look like?

Blue-green algae 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.

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

Benthic mats look like clumps of vegetation that can look black, brown or dark green in the water. They can be attached to rocks or aquatic vegetation or floating in the water. If they wash up on the shore, they may look brown or grey once they have dried.

Why is it dangerous for dogs?

Not all blue-green algae are harmful, but some may produce toxins that are harmful to a dog's liver and brain. Dogs are attracted to the odour, and if ingested, they may:

- Vomit and be sick;
- Have diarrhea;
- Have a seizure;
- Collapse and become unconscious;
- Experience breathing difficulties; or
- Die

What to do if I suspect blue-green algae poisoning?

Call a veterinarian right away. Poisoning can occur quickly after dogs have ingested blue-green algae, so rapid intervention is critical. There is currently no antidote for the toxins produced by blue-green algae.

How do I avoid blue-green algae?

Always check the water before entering. If surface blooms or mats are present, do not let your dog drink or swim in this water, and do not let them eat benthic mats or any vegetation floating in the water or along the shoreline.

On hot days, consider walking your dog earlier in the morning or later in the evening. Always take fresh water on your walks for you and your dog.

How do I report blue-green algae surface blooms or benthic mats?

Contact your nearest regional Environment and Local Government office.

For more information on how to report a bloom, visit <https://www2.gnb.ca/content/gnb/en/departments/elg/environment/content/water/content/algae/how.html>

