

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

October 4, 2021

Blue Green Algae – Lake of The Woods

There have been reports of multiple algae blooms in the northern sections of Lake of The Woods and in the Winnipeg River near Kenora. The presence of blue-green algae in Lake of The Woods was confirmed in July, so the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks will not be taking samples at this time. Northwestern Health Unit asks that people treat these newly reported blooms as though they are blue-green algae and take appropriate precaution.

Blue-green algae toxins can pose a health risk to people and animals when they are exposed to them in large amounts. Your health may be impacted when surface scum or water containing high levels of blue-green algal toxins are swallowed, contact the skin, or when airborne drops containing toxins are inhaled while swimming, bathing, or showering.

When blue-green algae blooms are present, it is important to avoid drinking the water, swimming, and using it for bathing or other household purposes. Residential water treatment systems may not remove toxins and should not be relied on during a bloom event. Do not boil the water, as this can cause an increase in toxin levels. Municipally treated water supplies can be used normally unless you are notified otherwise.

With the water in the region warming there is an increased risk of blue green algae blooms. People and pets should avoid contact with water that has been recently impacted by a blue green algae bloom, is discoloured or has scum on the surface. If contact does occur, wash with soap and water or rinse thoroughly with clean water to remove algae.

It is recommended to wait at least two weeks after the bloom has disappeared before resuming the normal use of lake waters.

If you spot a bloom, report it to the Spills Action Centre at 1-866-MOETIPS (6638477)

For more information on blue-green algae blooms, follow the links below:

- [Information about Blue-Green Algae – Ministry of Environment](#)
- <https://www2.nwhu.on.ca/our-services/safe-drinking-water/reported-blue-green-algae-blooms/>

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If you have questions please contact Northwestern Health Unit 1-800-830-5978 to speak with a public health inspector.

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