

Animal Safety Alert

CYANOBACTERIA BLOOMS

When in doubt, it's best to keep out!



What is a cyanobacteria bloom?

Cyanobacteria, sometimes called blue-green algae, are microscopic organisms found naturally in all types of water.

- Cyanobacteria grow quickly, or bloom, when the water is warm, stagnant, and full of nutrients.
- Cyanobacteria blooms usually occur during the summer and fall. However, they can occur anytime during the year.
- When a bloom occurs, scum might float on the water's surface.
- Blooms come in different colors, from green or blue to red or brown.
- As the bloom dies off, you may smell an odor like rotting plants.

What is a toxic bloom?

Sometimes, cyanobacteria produce toxins.

- The toxins can be present in the cyanobacteria cells or in the water.
- Swallowing water with cyanobacteria that are producing toxins can cause serious illness.

Health and Safety Tips for Pets and Livestock

- Do not let your pets or livestock graze near, drink, or swim in water where you see cyanobacteria blooms, foam, or scum on the surface.
- If your animal gets in water with a bloom, immediately wash it off with clean water. Do not let the animal lick cyanobacteria off of its fur.
- Call a veterinarian if your animal shows any of these symptoms of cyanobacteria poisoning: loss of energy, loss of appetite, vomiting, stumbling and falling, foaming at the mouth, diarrhea, convulsions, excessive drooling, tremors and seizures, or any unexplained sickness that occurs within a day or so after being in contact with water.

You can help protect your pets and livestock from cyanobacteria blooms by taking the following actions:

- Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/habs/general.html> to learn more about cyanobacteria.
- Know what a bloom looks like and avoid contact.
- Keep pets and livestock away from the water if you see signs of cyanobacteria.
- Call your veterinarian if your animals are sick.
- Call your state or local health department to report pets or livestock made sick by cyanobacteria.

To report a cyanobacteria bloom or a related health event:

- Call your local or state health department

You cannot tell if a bloom is toxic just by looking at it!



Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention
National Center for
Environmental Health