



THE RAPID GROWTH (BLOOM) OF ALGAE OR CYANOBACTERIA THAT CAN IMPACT WATER QUALITY AND AQUATIC LIFE.

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS



ALGAL BLOOMS ARE DANGEROUS WHEN THEY:

- * Make toxins
- * Use up oxygen in the water
- * Release harmful gases

WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY OUT!

IDENTIFYING ALGAL BLOOMS

Harmful algal blooms can appear as foam, scum, matts or even paint-like on the surface of the water. Some can grow underneath the water surface and can become hard to identify.



CAUSES

- Nitrogen and phosphorous pollution promotes algal growth
- Still and warm water creates an ideal environment for cyanobacteria to grow faster



In fresh water, cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) are the most common cause of HABs.

PREVENTING EXPOSURE

You can take steps to avoid getting sick from harmful algal blooms. For example:

- Stay out of discolored, scummy, or smelly water and keep pets away.
- Check for and follow swimming, fishing, and shellfish advisories.
- Follow guidance from local officials if there is a harmful algal bloom in your drinking water supply.

SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE



Ear, eye, nose, skin and throat ache & irritation



Paralysis, respiratory illness & seizures



Abdominal pain, diarrhea, liver & kidney damage & nausea



Drooling, diarrhea, low energy, no appetite & nausea

For more information or to report possible harmful algal blooms contact Westford Health Department :

978-692-5509 | <https://www.facebook.com/westfordhealth/>

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. Environmental Protection Agency & Natural Resources Defense Council