

Algae

You can help prevent the growth of algae:

- use phosphate-free detergents, personal care and household cleaning products
- use phosphorus free lawn fertilizer (10-0-10) the middle number is the phosphorus
- maintain a natural shoreline on waterfront properties
- maintain your septic system to ensure it does not leak into a water source
- on agricultural lands, plant cover crops and minimize fertilizer use
- reduce agricultural runoff by planting or maintaining vegetation along waterways

What are Blue-green algae?

Cyanobacteria, commonly called blue-green algae, are primitive microscopic organisms that have inhabited the earth for over 2 billion years. They are bacteria, but have features in common with algae. Their scientific name cyanobacteria comes from the Greek word blue. They occur naturally in a wide variety of environments including ponds, rivers, lakes and streams.



Some strains of blue-green algae can produce toxins that are harmful to both humans and animals. Dense blue-green algae blooms may make the water look like bluish-green or green pea soup or turquoise paint; however, olive-green and red blooms have been reported. Take a cautious approach with blue-green algae blooms, although many varieties are harmless, some can produce toxins. Only laboratory analysis can determine whether or not a bloom is toxic.

If you suspect a blue-green algal bloom:

- assume toxins are present
- avoid using, drinking, bathing or swimming in the water (check with your local health unit for swimming advisories)
- restrict pet and livestock access to the water

If you suspect a blue green algae bloom, you need to report it to the, Ministry of the Environment and Climate Changes Spill Action Centre at 1-800-268-6060

Contact your local health unit for information on health risks associated with blue-green algae blooms.

Visit our web site for fact sheets on blue-green algae. www.bqrap.ca

Healthy Bay • Healthy Community