

Blue-Green Algae Public Notice

October 30, 2020

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit would like to inform residents and visitors to the Township of Severn that laboratory analysis has confirmed the presence of a blue-green algae bloom impacting the North end of Otter Lake, Township of Severn.

Many species of blue-green algae (also called cyanobacteria) have the potential to produce toxins that are harmful to the health of humans and animals when exposed in large amounts.

If you are drawing your water from the North end of Otter Lake, Township of Severn, **boiling the water will not destroy toxins and home treatment devices may not be effective for their removal. Until further notice, do not use the water for drinking or for food preparation including breastmilk substitute (infant formula).** Safe water sources include municipal water, bottled water or a good well that is not affected by lake water.

The health unit urges residents and businesses not to drink water from this lake where blue-green algae is visible and to take the following precautions:

- do not use the lake water for the preparation of infant formula
- do not allow pets or livestock to drink or swim in the water where an algae bloom is visible
- be cautious about eating fish caught in water where blue-green algae blooms occur
- do not use herbicides, copper sulphate or other algaecides that may break open algae cells and release toxins into the water
- avoid swimming and water sport activities where an algae bloom is visible

Seek medical attention if symptoms such as skin, eye or throat irritation, allergic reactions or breathing difficulties occur while in contact with the bloom. Anyone who comes into contact with blue-green algae should wash with soap and water or rinse thoroughly with clean water.

The health unit and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks will continue to work together to monitor the algal bloom and updates will be provided on our website www.smdhu.org.

For further information, call Your Health Connection Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520. Links to general information and updates about blue-green algae are available on the health unit website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

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