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DOH-MARION REISSUES BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOM ALERT FOR ORANGE LAKE



Contact:

Bill Thompson, Public Information Officer

William.Thompson@flhealth.gov

Mobile: 352-843-9471

Desk: 352-644-2664

Ocala, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health in Marion County has reissued a Health Alert for the presence of harmful blue-green algal toxins in Orange Lake, near McIntosh.

This is a continuation of a previous Health Alert the department issued for the lake on March 4. This alert is being reissued after a water sample taken on April 21 by the Florida Department of Environmental Protection indicated that toxins were still present.

The public should exercise caution in and around Orange Lake.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Do not drink, swim, wade, use personal watercraft, water ski, or boat in waters where there is a visible algae bloom. Do not get water in your eyes, nose, or mouth.
- Wash your skin and clothing with soap and water if you have contact with algae or discolored or smelly water.
- Keep pets away from the area. Waters where there are algae blooms are not safe for animals. Pets and livestock should have a different source of water when algae blooms are present.
- Do not cook or clean dishes with water contaminated by algae blooms. Boiling the water will not eliminate the toxins.
- Eating fillets from healthy fish caught in freshwater lakes experiencing blooms is safe. Rinse fish fillets with tap or bottled water, throw out the guts and cook fish well.
- Do not eat shellfish in waters with algae blooms.

What is blue-green algae?

Blue-green algae are a type of bacteria that is common in Florida's freshwater environments. A bloom occurs when rapid growth of algae leads to an accumulation of individual cells that discolor water and often produce floating mats that emit unpleasant odors.

Some environmental factors that contribute to blue-green algae blooms are sunny days, warm water temperatures, still water conditions and excess nutrients. Blooms can appear year-round but are more frequent in summer and fall. Many types of blue-green algae can produce toxins.

Is it harmful?

Blue-green algae blooms can impact human health and ecosystems, including fish and other aquatic animals.

For additional information on potential health effects of algal blooms, visit [floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins](https://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins).

Find current information about Florida's water quality status and public health notifications for harmful algal blooms and beach conditions by visiting **ProtectingFloridaTogether.gov**. Protecting Florida Together is the state's joint effort to provide statewide water quality information to prioritize environmental transparency and commitment to action.

What do I do if I see an algal bloom?

The Florida Department of Environmental Protection collects and analyzes algal bloom samples. To report a bloom to DEP, call the toll-free hotline at 855-305-3903 or report online at surveygizmo.com/s3/3444948/Algal-Bloom-Reporting-Form.

To report fish kills, contact the Florida Fish and Wildlife Research Institute at 1-800-636-0511.

Report symptoms from exposure to a harmful algal bloom or any aquatic toxin to the Florida Poison Information Center. Call 1-800-222-1222 to speak to a poison specialist immediately.

Contact your veterinarian if you believe your pet has become ill after consuming or having contact with blue-green algae contaminated water.

If you have other health questions or concerns about blue-green algae blooms, please contact the Florida Department of Health in Marion County at 352-629-0137, or at Info.Marion@FLHealth.gov.

Lifting the alert

A health alert is lifted once negative toxin analyses are obtained from DEP-coordinated resampling of the bloom, or 30 days have elapsed since the last sampling date. If a health alert has been issued, it can be rescinded at this time.

About the Florida Department of Health

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