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## DOH-PINELLAS ISSUES BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOM ALERT FOR MAXIMO PARK



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A red and white health alert poster. The top section is red with the text "HEALTH ALERT" in large white letters, followed by "Blue Green Algae are in these waters." and "STAY SAFE FROM TOXINS." in white. Below this is a photograph of a pond with a thick green algae bloom. Underneath the photo, it says "During this health alert:" followed by five bullet points with icons: "Do not swim at this location.", "Do not get this water in your eyes, nose or mouth.", "Do not eat shellfish from this location.", "Rinse fish fillets with tap or bottled water. Throw out guts. Cook fish well.", and "Keep pets and livestock away from these waters." There is a small circular seal and a QR code at the bottom right of the poster.

The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) has issued a health alert for the presence of harmful blue-green algal toxins at Maximo Park located at Sunshine Skyway Lane and Pinellas Point Dr. South in St. Petersburg. This is in response to a water sample taken on June 30. The public should exercise caution in and around the water at Maximo Park. Warning signs will be posted around the park to alert visitors.

Residents and visitors are advised to take the following precautions:

- Do not drink, swim, wade, use personal watercraft, or boat in waters where there is a visible bloom.
  - 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 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 waters experiencing blooms of this type 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 naturally occurring type of bacteria that is common in Florida's freshwater environments but can also be found in some marine 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](http://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](#).

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 by calling 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, call DOH-Pinellas at (727) 507-4336.

### **What is being done about the algal bloom?**

The City of Saint Petersburg has been monitoring conditions and working closely with DOH. Water sampling will continue until the algal presence has subsided.

For questions or concerns about remediation activities, call City of St. Petersburg, Water Resources Department (727) 893-7261.

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## **About the Florida Department of Health**

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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