

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Aug 8, 2023

## HEALTH OFFICIALS ISSUE BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOM ALERT FOR MULTIPLE LAKE OKEECHOBEE LOCATIONS



**Contact:**

Communications Office

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**Palm Beach County, FL** - The Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County has issued a Health Alert for the presence of harmful blue-green algal toxins in the following **Lake Okeechobee water body locations**:

[S271 \(lakeside\)](#)

[S352 \(lakeside\)](#)

[S354 \(lakeside\)](#)

This is in response to water samples taken on August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2023. The public should exercise caution in and around these areas. This is a recreational surface water alert, **drinking water is not affected**.

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.

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 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 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.

## 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 [www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins](http://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.

**To see if an algae bloom health alert has been lifted, please see this link below and enter "palm beach county" for location:**

<https://protectingfloridatogether.gov/water-quality-status-dashboard>

## 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, 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 call the Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County Communications Office at 561-671-4014.

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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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