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DOH-PINELLAS ISSUES BLUE-GREEN ALGAE BLOOM ALERT FOR LAKE SEMINOLE BOAT RAMP



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Pinellas County, Fla. - The Florida Department of Health in Pinellas County (DOH-Pinellas) has issued a health alert for harmful blue-green algal toxins at Lake Seminole, 10015 Park Boulevard North, Seminole. The alert is in response to a water sample taken near the boat ramp on April 20, 2023. The public should exercise caution in and around Lake Seminole. Warning signs will be posted at the boat ramp to alert park visitors.

DOH-Pinellas advises residents and visitors to take the following precautions:

- Do not drink, swim, wade, or use personal watercraft or boats in waters with 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. Pets should not drink water when algae blooms are present. Waters with algae blooms are not safe for animals.
- 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 are blue-green algae?

Blue-green algae are a type of bacteria common in Florida's freshwater environments. A bloom occurs when the 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 contributing 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 the potential health effects of algal blooms, visit 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 write **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, call DOH-Pinellas at (727) 507-4336.

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