

Keeping Your Pet Safe from Harmful Algal Blooms



What you need to know about preventing algae-related illness:

- HABs or Harmful Algal Blooms appear on lakes and ponds during the summer and fall and result from an excess amount of blue-green algae.
- HABs can make recreational waters look pea soupy. They can also form a **blue**, **green**, **red**, white or brown scum layer on the water's surface.
- Some blue-green algae species can produce toxins that make animals and humans sick.
- These toxins can cause illness through inhalation, ingestion or direct skin contact.
- For pets, **ingestion** of toxins is the typical route of exposure.

Pets are especially susceptible to HABs because they don't naturally avoid green, smelly water likes humans do. Many dogs have gotten sick and **some have died** in Wisconsin by drinking water from lakes or ponds experiencing an algal bloom.

Pets also require ingestion of a smaller amount of toxins to harm them due to their smaller size.

What You Can Do To Protect Your Pet

Be aware of HABs in areas where your pet swims or plays and watch for scum material on the shore. After a possible HAB exposure monitor your pet closely for the next 24 hours and contact your veterinarian immediately if your animal shows any of the following symptoms:

**Lethargy, Vomiting, Diarrhea, Convulsions,
Difficulty Breathing,
General Weakness**

DO NOT let pets swim in or drink from areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water.

DO NOT let pets lick the algae or scum off their fur.

DO rinse yourself and your pet off immediately if there is any contact with algae-affected waters.

DO watch for beach postings and water quality notices before swimming or allowing your pet to play in the water.

DO seek medical treatment right away if you think you or your pet may have been poisoned by algal toxins.

**Please report any algae-related illnesses
to the Harmful Algal Blooms Surveillance
Program**

The Wisconsin Division of Public Health and the CDC are asking the public to quickly notify them of any human or animal illness related to blue-green algae.

For more information or to report an illness,
please call **(608) 266-1120** or
visit: <http://dhs.wi.gov/eh/bluegreenalgae/>

