

Communications Office

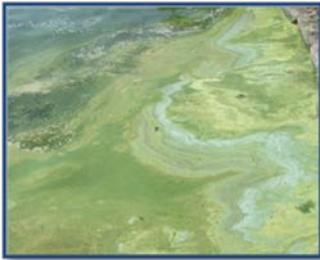
Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
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(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, September 20, 2013, Peterborough

Blue-Green Algae Continue to Bloom on Local Lakes: Know the Risks and How to Protect Yourself



The Peterborough County-City Health Unit is advising local residents to protect themselves from blue-green algae which continue to bloom on area lakes.

The Health Unit with the assistance of the Ministry of the Environment have received reports of the presence or confirmation of blue-green algae in Peterborough County in the areas of: Mill Line Road, Crowes Line Road, Fire Route 94 (off of Nichols Cove Road), Kennedy Drive and Tait's Bay off of Pirate's Glen Road near Alpine Village.

"Residents should visit the Health Unit's website or call us for information about what to look for before swimming or consuming water if they suspect a bloom in their area," said Atul Jain, Manager of Inspection Services Programs at the Health Unit. "Just as we've all learned how to avoid poison ivy and sunburns, it's important to know how to protect ourselves from blue-green algae so everyone can still safely enjoy the outdoors."

Blue-green algae are a type of bacteria, called cyanobacteria that are known for rapidly reproducing and collecting to form large, highly visible blooms throughout the water column, on the surface of water as a scum, or on the lake bottom as a mat. These blooms are not only unsightly and smelly: some species of cyanobacteria can also release poisons, called cyanobacterial toxins, when the cells that make up the bloom rupture or die.

To report a blue-green algae bloom, residents are advised to contact the Ministry of the Environment at **1-800-268-6060**.

The risk to humans is primarily from drinking water that has been contaminated with toxins from a dense algae bloom. Fortunately, there have been no human deaths attributed to drinking water containing cyanobacterial toxins, but the toxins may cause headaches, fever, nausea, vomiting, abdominal pain or diarrhea. Long-term consumption of water containing high levels of cyanobacterial toxins may cause neurological or liver problems. If allowed, farm animals and pets may consume large quantities of heavily contaminated water, resulting in sickness or death.

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Some individuals are sensitive to blue-green algae, and may develop a mild skin rash or eye irritation even if there is no toxin produced by the bloom. Some individuals will have no reaction.

For more information on blue-green algae, and precautions to be taken before swimming in or consuming water where there has been an algae bloom, go to www.pcchu.ca, click on "My Home & Environment" and visit the webpage dedicated to [blue-green algae](#).

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For further information, please contact:

Public Health Inspector
705-743-1000