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LABOR DAY WATER ACTIVITIES SHOULD AVOID CONTACT WITH BLUE-GREEN ALGAE DUE TO HEALTH CONCERNS FOR HUMANS AND ANIMALS

Health officials continue to urge caution

STOCKTON, CA (August 29, 2019) – This is a reminder that typical Labor Day weekend activities on or near the waterways can bring humans and animals into contact with blue-green algae. Warm temperatures can create the right conditions for blue-green algae to rapidly build-up or bloom on the surface of reservoirs, rivers, creeks, lagoons, lakes and ponds. Environmental Health and Public Health officials are urging swimmers, boaters, and recreational water users to avoid contact with blue-green algae (BGA), also known as cyanobacteria. The algae blooms may produce toxins that can present a health hazard to humans and animals. San Joaquin County Public Health Officer, Dr. Kismet Baldwin advises, “We want everyone to enjoy the holiday weekend safely. Remember to exercise caution and observe signage that warns people to avoid active algal blooms.”

The algae blooms can look like green, blue-green, white, or brown foam and scum floating on the water. Children are especially vulnerable because they play on the shoreline, drink more water than adults when swimming, and are of a smaller body size. Dogs are also especially vulnerable to BGA poisoning and many dogs are lost each year because they tend to drink more water and lick algae off their fur.

Statewide Guidance on Harmful Algae Blooms recommends the following:

- Avoid wading and swimming in water containing visible blooms or water containing algae scum or mats, which are most often present at the shoreline.
- Take care that pets and livestock do not drink the water or swim through scums, mats, nor lick their fur after going in the water. Wash exposed pets in clean drinking water.
- If no algae scums or mats are visible, you should carefully watch young children and warn them not to swallow the water.
- Do not drink, cook, or wash dishes with untreated water.
- Consume fish only after removing guts and liver, and rinsing fillets in clean drinking water. Mussels should not be consumed.
- Get medical treatment right away if you think you, your pet, or your livestock might have been poisoned by blue-green algae toxins.

Human Exposure General Health Effects:

- Rashes or other skin irritations
- Allergy-like reactions, runny nose or sore throat
- Toxins ingested in large amounts can cause sharp, severe stomach problems like diarrhea and vomiting, liver damage, numb limbs, tingling fingers and toes or dizziness







Animal Exposure Health Effects:

- Weakness, staggering
- Difficulty breathing
- Convulsions
- Vomiting and diarrhea
- Death, if not treated

Please follow the recommendations shown on the health advisory signs that swimmers, boaters and recreational users should avoid contact with BGA.

CAUTION

**Harmful algae may be present in this water.
For you and your family's safety:**

 <p>Stay away from scum, and cloudy or discolored water.</p>	 <p>Do not let pets and other animals go into or drink the water, or eat scum on the shore.</p>
 <p>Keep children away from algae in the water or on the shore.</p>	 <p>Do not drink this water or use it for cooking.</p>
 <p>For fish caught here, throw away guts and clean fillets with tap water or bottled water before cooking.</p>	 <p>Do not eat shellfish from this water.</p>

❖ **Call your doctor or veterinarian** if you or your pet get sick after going in the water

❖ For more information on harmful algae, go to <https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/index.html>

❖ For a listing of locations where harmful algal blooms have been voluntarily reported go to https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/where/freshwater_events.html

The California Water Boards recommends that you practice Healthy Habits while enjoying the outdoors at your local lake, river, or stream. More information on healthy water habits can be found at <https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/do/>

For more information, visit:

- California Harmful Algal Bloom Portal <https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/do/>
- Report a potential harmful algal bloom at <https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/do/bloomreport.html>
- California Water Quality Monitoring Council: <https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/index.html>
- California State Water Resources Control Board: <https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/>
- California Department of Public Health: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDCPHP/DEODC/EHIB/EAS/Pages/HABs.aspx>
- CA Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment: <https://oehha.ca.gov/ecotoxicology/general-info/information-microcystins>
- U.S. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/habs/index.html>
- U.S. Environmental Protection Agency: <https://www.epa.gov/nutrientpollution/harmful-algal-blooms>

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