

ALGAE BLOOM DETECTED ON HESS LAKE IN NEWAYGO COUNTY

August 30, 2022 – District Health Department #10 (DHD#10) was notified by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) that algae blooms were detected on Hess Lake in Newaygo County.

Just recently, after being notified about what looked like algae blooms on Hess Lake, the United States Geological Survey (USGS) took samples on August 24, 2022, which were sent to the MDHHS lab where results came back positive for microcystin, an algal toxin released by some types of algae in lakes or rivers. Algae blooms can form when there are high nutrient levels within bodies of water along with warm temperatures. Signs have been placed in and around the boat launch area to notify individuals to avoid contact with the water.

“Algae blooms look like a green mat right on top of the water that smells bad and has a gelatinous texture to them,” stated Michael Kramer, Environmental Health Director for DHD#10. “The algal toxins that are released can be harmful to aquatic life, pets, and humans so it is very important to avoid these areas.”



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Below are some steps to take when near waterways:

- Avoid direct contact with waterways that appear to be scummy or have a green shade to them
- Do not drink untreated surface water
- Obey posted signage for public health advisories and/or beach closings
- Limit or avoid eating fish from algal bloom impacted areas

Contact with algae blooms can cause minor illness in humans but can be fatal to pets. Therefore, it is also recommended that people keep their pets out of the water that shows any signs of algae blooms.

People and pets can experience the following symptoms after exposure to algae blooms:

- Rash, hives, or skin blisters at skin contact site
- Runny eyes and/or nose, sore throat, asthma-like symptoms, or allergic reactions
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, weakness, tingy fingers, numbness, dizziness, difficulty breathing, or even death resulting from ingesting contaminated water

If you think you have been exposed to algae blooms, take the following precautions:

- Immediately remove yourself and/or your pet from the area
- Take a shower and thoroughly rinse off pets with clean, fresh water if they swam in an area with algae blooms to avoid potential toxic ingestion from licking
- Seek medical treatment for yourself and/or veterinary treatment for your pet as soon as possible if you think you or your pet may have been exposed to or ingested algal toxins

For more information about Harmful Algal Blooms, visit
<https://www.michigan.gov/egle/about/organization/water-resources/assessment-michigan-waters/harmful-algal-blooms>.

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