



Eastern Highlands Health District

4 South Eagleville Road • Mansfield CT 06268 • Tel: (860) 429-3325 • Fax: (860) 429-3321 • Web: www.EHHD.org

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

DATE: July 22, 2022

TO: Coventry Lake Residents and Visitors

FROM: Robert Miller, MPH, RS, Director of Health

RE: Blue-green algae bloom at Coventry Lake

Please be advised that recent algae test results have confirmed the presence of a blue-green algae bloom at Coventry Lake that may present harmful health effects for users of lake. The health outcomes of concern are:

- Irritations of the skin, eyes or ears
- GI problems like vomiting and diarrhea
- Muscle cramps
- In extreme cases nerve or liver problems

Blue-green algae, also known as Cyanobacteria, occur naturally in lakes and ponds throughout Connecticut. These microscopic organisms are components of the aquatic food chain. In ordinary circumstances, Cyanobacteria cause no apparent harm. However warmer water temperatures and high nutrient concentrations may induce a rapid increase in their abundance. This response is commonly called a “bloom“ because algal biomass increases to the extent that normally clear water becomes markedly turbid.

Harmful health effects from the bloom can result through skin contact with the algae tainted water, swallowing the water, and when airborne droplets are inhaled. Pets are especially prone to the health effects not only through skin contact, but also by ingesting significant amounts of the toxin by licking their wet fur after leaving the water.

To protect yourself and your family from any harmful effects of this blue-green algae bloom, residents and visitors are advised to avoid contacting water that has a noxious odor, appears green throughout (sometimes referred to as looking like pea soup), or that has mats, films or scums accumulating on the surface.

Until further notice avoid these *high* risk activities:

- Any contact with the water including swimming, diving, playing, or wading
- Drinking, or allowing animals to drink the water
- Using the lake water to fill a pool or for outdoor showers
- Water sports, e.g. water skiing, wake boarding, wind surfing, jet skiing, tubing



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Other activities that pose a *moderate* risk to health include:

- Fish consumption
- Canoeing
- Rowing
- Sailing
- Kayaking
- Paddle boarding
- Motor boating

If you or your pet accidentally come in contact with algae tainted water then thoroughly rinse off with clean water.

If you experience any of the symptoms of blue-green algae exposure (listed above) contact your health care provider or call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222. If your pet experiences symptoms, contact your veterinarian immediately.

Regular monitoring of lake conditions will occur moving forward until bloom dissipates. The community will be notified of the bloom dissipation at that time.

Check the Health District or Town website for additional information and updates. Public health questions can be directed to the Eastern Highlands Health District main office at 860-429-3325. Additional information can be found at:

<https://portal.ct.gov/DEEP/Water/Water-Quality/Blue-Green-Algae-Blooms>

<https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/Environmental-Health/Environmental-Health-Section/Blue-Green-Algae-Blooms>