

Harmful algae bloom found on Lake Erie

PAINESVILLE - On July 2, Lake County General Health District (LCGHD) found blue-green algae on Lake Erie within and possibly extending beyond the Lake County borders. Laboratory testing from samples collected confirmed the presence of a harmful algal bloom (HAB). The HAB is a large growth of naturally-occurring bacteria that can produce toxins (poisons). The toxin may still be present even if the bloom cannot be seen. Until test results for the toxins are received, the public is strongly encouraged to follow these recommendations:

Visitors to the beach and their pets should be aware of the risk of contact with water where HAB was found. Boaters and jet skiers are cautioned also that water spray contact on skin or breathing/inhaling water droplets may cause health problems. Toxins may cause a skin rash, blisters, or hives. Vomiting, diarrhea,

dizziness, tingling, numbness, sore throat or headaches are some symptoms. In severe cases, liver or kidney damage may occur. If people or pets are accidentally exposed to waters where HAB may have been found, completely rinse off after coming out of the water. Avoid accidental ingestion or drinking of any surface water at the beach.

Fish may be eaten at your own risk. If eaten, be sure to remove the intestines, fat and skin.

There will be informational signs at the beach asking the public to be aware of the HABs. The public is strongly encouraged obey the signs. Signs will be updated to include stronger warnings if toxins are identified. The most up-to-date information can be found at the LCGHD website at www.lcghd.org. Additional information, including specific veterinary and medical fact sheets may be found at www.ohioalgaeinfo.com.