

GET TO KNOW CYANOBACTERIA (BLUE-GREEN ALGAE)

Cyanobacteria are a type of bacteria naturally found in waterbodies and are a key food source for aquatic life. They are not normally visible, but they can increase in numbers quickly to form surface blooms and benthic mats.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF CYANOBACTERIA BLOOMS IN NEW BRUNSWICK:

What do **SURFACE BLOOMS** look like?



- Surface blooms can discolor the water or produce scum, foam or floating mats on the water's surface.
- They often appear green or blue-green in colour, but sometimes can appear red or brown.
- Some blooms look like paint streaks on the water.



What do **BENTHIC MATS** look like?



- Clumps of vegetation that appear black, brown or dark green in the water.
- On the shore, benthic mats may be brown or grey once they have dried.
- May be attached to rocks or aquatic vegetation, be found floating in the water or dried on the shoreline.



CYANOBACTERIA & YOUR HEALTH

Not all cyanobacteria are harmful, but some can produce toxins. Swimming in water containing a cyanobacteria bloom may cause skin, eye and throat irritations. More serious health effects such as gastrointestinal illness can occur if cyanobacteria toxins are swallowed. Children and pets can be at greater risk of illness.

ENJOY THE OUTDOORS & BE ALERT

Being active and enjoying the outdoors has many benefits for our physical and mental well-being. Always check the water and scan the shoreline before engaging in recreational water activities like swimming, wading, canoeing and paddle boarding, etc.

DID YOU KNOW?

Cyanobacteria is the proper name for blue-green algae, because these organisms are actually bacteria and not algae at all! Cyanobacteria were the earliest known forms of life on earth. When first discovered, cyanobacteria looked similar to algae and can sometimes appear blue-green in colour – which is why the term blue-green algae was used.

BE INFORMED & STAY SAFE



Always check the water and avoid swimming in areas where there are visible surface blooms or mats.



Supervise children and pets near recreational waters.



Bathe or shower after being in recreational waters.



Wash your hands before eating.



Do not enter the water with open cuts or wounds.



Do not swallow the water.



Ingesting benthic mats may be lethal to dogs.

TO REPORT A CYANOBACTERIA BLOOM

Contact the nearest Department of Environment and Local Government Regional Office.

To learn more about cyanobacteria, visit: www.gnb.ca/algae

