

Immediate Release:
May 21, 2021

Advisory: Harmful Algal Bloom in Chandler Lake
Residents or visitors advised to avoid touching algae or scum

The Grand Traverse County Health Department (GTCHD), in consultation with the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), is issuing a public health advisory for a harmful algal bloom in Chandler Lake in East Bay Township. People and pets should avoid direct body contact with scums on the lake, water that is blue-green, or water that looks like it has a green sheen or spilled paint on its surface. People and pets should also avoid swallowing the lake water.

There are different types of naturally occurring algal blooms that may be seen on lakes and rivers. Most are not harmful. However, there are some that are made of cyanobacteria that have the ability to produce toxins, causing a harmful algal bloom (HAB). A photo taken and submitted by the residents of Chandler Lake on May 20 showed the presence of an algal bloom. The Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes, and Energy (EGLE) visited the lake to test for the presence of cyanotoxins within the bloom. EGLE has communicated that results will likely take at least a week. An additional sample is scheduled to be collected this weekend.

At this time, for your safety:

- Swimming is permitted, but stay away from water that has scums or mats, looks like spilled paint, or has colored streaks.
- Keep children and pets away from algae in the water or on the shore.
- Do not let pets or livestock drink the water or eat scum on the shore.
- All fish should be caught and released and not consumed. Chandler Lake is under a Do Not Eat Fish Advisory.
- Do not drink water from lakes, ponds, or rivers.
- Rinse people and pets off after swimming.
- When in doubt, keep people and pets out of the water.
- Call your doctor or veterinarian, if you or your pet get sick after going into the water.

People can water ski, boat, and tube, but it is advised that caution be taken in doing so in areas with visible algal scums. Breathing in water droplets with algae from the boat spray may cause nose and throat irritation. Swallowing large amounts of water containing cyanotoxins, while swimming, wading, or playing in the water may cause flu-like symptoms, gastrointestinal illness, or neurotoxic symptoms. These may include abdominal pain, vomiting, diarrhea, weakness, numbness, headaches, dizziness, or difficulty breathing.

What causes HABs to form?

Factors that can contribute to HABs include: sunlight; low-water or low-flow conditions; calm water; warmer temperatures; and excess nutrients (phosphorus or nitrogen). The primary sources of nutrient pollution are runoff of fertilizers, animal manure, sewage treatment plant discharges, storm water, car and power plant emissions, and failing septic tanks.

What should I do if I see a HAB?

- Do not let your children or pets play in HAB debris on the shore.
- After swimming or wading in lake water, even where no HABs are visible, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible.
- Never swallow any lake or river water, whether you see HABs or not.
- Do not let pets lick HAB material from their fur or eat HAB material.
- Do not drink or cook with lake water.
- See a doctor if you or your children might be ill from HAB toxins. If your pet appears ill, contact your veterinarian.

Suspicious-looking algae can be reported to EGLE by calling the Environmental Assistance Center at 1-800-662-9278 or sending an e-mail to AlgaeBloom@Michigan.gov. More information can be found at michigan.gov/habs.

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Media Contact: Emmy Schumacher, eschumacher@gtcountymi.gov, 231-493-8376