

Blue-Green Algae Blooms

CYANOBACTERIA and Your Pets

Blue-green Algae in New Mexico

Blue-green algae blooms are becoming common in New Mexico's lakes and reservoirs. Also called cyanobacteria, and pond scum, these microscopic organisms are found naturally in all types of water, including fresh, brackish (combined salt and fresh water), marine water, and slow-moving stream when water is warm and stagnant.

Blue-green Algae and Pet Health



Blue-green algae can form blooms that can, but not always make people, their pets and other animals sick. Animals can come in contact with cyanobacteria and cyanotoxins that are in the environment by:

- drinking water that comes from a lake or reservoir that has a cyanobacteria bloom.
- swimming or doing other recreational activities in or on waters that have cyanobacteria blooms.

The types of illnesses animals get from being exposed to blue-green algae include:

- In dogs, symptoms can include drooling, weakness, staggering, difficulty breathing, convulsions and death.
- Small animals are most prone to health effects because they weigh less and can get a relatively larger dose of toxin. Dogs are particularly susceptible to blue-green algae poisoning because scums can attach to their coats and be swallowed during self-cleaning.

Protect Your Pet

To protect your pet from cyanobacteria:

- Do not allow pets to play in or drink scummy water. Don't let pets or livestock swim in or drink from areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of cyanobacteria on the water's surface.
- If your pet swims in water that might contain harmful cyanobacteria, rinse your pet off with fresh water as soon as possible afterward. Do not let them lick the cyanobacteria off their fur.



- Don't let pets drink the water.
- Follow any water-body closures announced by local authorities.
- Report any "musty" smell or taste in your drinking water to your local water utility

For more information on cyanobacteria, visit

<https://nmtracking.org/>

<https://www.cdc.gov/habs/general.html>

For information on animal health and safety:

Veterinarian reference card - https://www.cdc.gov/habs/pdf/habsveterinarian_card.pdf

Health and safety tips - https://www.cdc.gov/habs/pdf/algal_bloom_tall_card.pdf

For information on human health and safety:

Physician reference card - https://www.cdc.gov/habs/pdf/habsphysician_card.pdf

<https://nmtracking.org>



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