A harmful algal bloom (HAB) is an overgrowth of algae in a water body that could affect water quality and aquatic life. Some HABs produced by bacteria can create toxins that may also harm people, animals, and the local environment.

**HOW TO IDENTIFY A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM**

Algal blooms can make the water appear green, blue, brown, gold, or red.

Seeing colors, scum, mats, foam, or paint-like streaks in the water or clumps on the shore may indicate a bloom. However, only professional water testing can confirm if HABs and toxins are present. States often have monitoring programs for this purpose.

**SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE**

Vary depending on how the person or animal was exposed, and whether the HAB is in salt or fresh water.

- **Exposed?**
  - Shower immediately.
  - See a doctor or vet if symptoms occur.
  - Ear, eye, nose, skin, and throat irritation, and headache
  - Paralysis, respiratory illness, and seizures
  - Abdominal pain, diarrhea, liver and kidney damage, and vomiting
  - Drooling, diarrhea, low energy, not eating, stumbling, tremors, and vomiting
  - Paralysis, respiratory illness, and seizures

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**WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY OUT!**

Stay away from the water when a suspected HAB is present.

- **Don’t** Play with scum or mats on the shore
- **Don’t** Let animals drink water, eat algae, or swim
- **Don’t** Swim
- **Don’t** Fish or wade
- **Don’t** Boat or kayak

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT POSSIBLE HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS:**

(208) 455-5400