

## Officials Issue Warning About Klamath River Blue-Green Algae

**Federal and state agencies warn that contact with the blue-green algae can cause eye irritation and skin rash in humans and pets.**

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Swimmers, boaters and other water enthusiasts are urged to avoid contact with the blue-green algae now blooming in Iron Gate and Copco Reservoirs on the Klamath River in Northern California. Federal, state, local and tribal agencies report that contact with the blue-green algae can cause health risks such as eye irritation, allergic skin rash, mouth ulcers, vomiting, diarrhea and cold and flu-like symptoms. Liver failure and death have occurred in rare situations where large amounts of contaminated water were ingested.

“As blue-green algae can pose health risks, especially to children and pets, we urge people to be careful where they swim when visiting the reservoirs,” said Alexis Strauss, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s water division director for the Pacific Southwest region. “Try to avoid swimming or inhaling drops of water in an algal bloom area, as well as skin contact with water by people or their pets.”

The algal blooms look like green, blue-green, white or brown foam, scum or mats floating on the water, report the agencies including the EPA, the North Coast Regional Water Quality Control Board, State Water Resources Control Board, the Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment, the Department of Public Health and the Yurok and Karuk Tribes. The agencies issued the following precautions:

Avoid wading and swimming in water containing visible blooms or water containing algal scums or mats.

Even when no algal scums or mats are visible, watch young children carefully and warn them not to swallow the water.

Do not drink, cook or wash dishes with untreated surface water under any circumstances.

Consume fish caught from these waters only after removing the guts and liver, and after rinsing fillets in clean drinking water.

Take care that pets and livestock neither drink the water or swim through heavy scums or mats, nor lick their fur after going into the water.

Seek medical treatment right away if you think that you, your pet or your livestock might have been poisoned by blue-green algae toxins. Alert the medical professional to the possible contact with blue-green algae.

For more information, visit the California Department of Public Health website.