

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY

For Immediate Release

August 13, 2021

Central District Health issues public health advisory for Cascade Reservoir due to Harmful Algal Bloom

Valley County, Idaho – Central District Health (CDH), in conjunction with the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ), has issued a public health advisory, effective immediately, for Cascade Reservoir due to the presence of cyanobacteria, also known as a Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB).

DEQ will continue conducting surveillance through satellite imagery, on-site observation, and will continue with weekly water sampling of Cascade Reservoir.

People and animals can get sick if they swim, wade, or play in or near HAB-contaminated water, eat contaminated fish, shellfish, or use contaminated drinking water.

When recreating near or in any surface water with a health advisory in effect, take the following precautions for yourself and pets:

- Avoid swimming, wading, or other activities. Take extra precautions to ensure children, pets, and livestock are not exposed to the water.
- Do not drink or cook with water containing a bloom. Boiling and filtering the water can increase the risk.
- Wash your hands thoroughly after handling fish caught in water experiencing a bloom. Cyanotoxins can accumulate in fish and the risk to people is being researched. Any fish caught should be cleaned and washed thoroughly in uncontaminated water and any internal organs disposed of before consumption. If people choose to eat fish from this area, filet the fish and remove all of the fat, skin, and organs before cooking.
- Clean with potable water as soon as possible if water contacts skin or pet fur.

Symptoms of Cyanotoxin Exposure

Symptoms of cyanotoxin exposure include rashes, hives, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, and/or wheezing. More severe symptoms affecting the liver and nervous system may result from ingesting water. If symptoms persist, consult your healthcare provider. Wash your pet with clean water and shampoo if it has been around a harmful algal bloom. If it shows symptoms such as vomiting, staggering, drooling or convulsions, contact your vet immediately.

About Cyanobacteria

Cyanobacteria are a natural part of Idaho's water bodies. When temperatures rise, their populations can bloom and toxic chemical compounds, or cyanotoxins, can be released into the water. Blooms can vary in appearance, and may look like mats, foam, spilled paint, or surface scum, and they can have a foul odor. While blooms can be discovered in one area of recreational water, they can move around to different areas and water depths and can change in severity.

Common indicators of a Harmful Algal Bloom include:

- The water has foam, scum, algal mats, or paint-like streaks on the surface
- The water looks discolored
- The water smells unusually bad

Protect yourself and pets: know before you go

When visiting recreational bodies of water look for any potential warning signage posted at kiosks or parking areas; signs will not likely be posted on beaches themselves. You can also view current advisories in place in Idaho through the DEQ HAB webpage at <https://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/cyanobacteria-harmful-algal-blooms/>.

If you see or suspect a bloom, stay out of the water. You cannot tell if a bloom is harmful by looking at it, so it is best to use caution and stay away.

- *Learn more about identifying a harmful algal bloom:*
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NBhcryEA4c>.
- *Report suspicious-looking water to DEQ by phone, email, with the bloomWatch app, or online at:*
<https://www.deq.idaho.gov/report-a-potential-cyanobacteria-algal-bloom/>.

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