

Blue-Green Algae Public Notice

July 29, 2020

The Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit would like to inform residents and visitors to the Township of Muskoka Lakes that laboratory analysis has confirmed the presence of a bloom of blue-green algae in the North end of Brandy Lake, Muskoka Lakes (Falkenburg Road and Brackenrig Road area).

Many species of blue-green algae (also called cyanobacteria) have the potential to produce toxins that are harmful to the health of humans and animals when exposed in large amounts. Water sampling has been conducted to determine the presence of any toxins and results are pending. Due to the confirmed presence of the bloom we are asking resident and visitors to exercise caution that toxins may also be present.

As a precautionary measure, the health unit urges residents and businesses with private lake water supplies where blue-green algae is visible to avoid drinking the water and to take the following precautions:

- do not use the lake water for the preparation of infant formula
- do not allow pets or livestock to drink or swim in the water where an algae bloom is visible
- be cautious about eating fish caught in water where blue-green algae blooms occur
- do not use herbicides, copper sulphate or other algaecides that may break open algae cells and release toxins into the water
- avoid water sport activities where an algae bloom is visible

Seek medical attention if symptoms such as skin, eye or throat irritation, allergic reactions or breathing difficulties occur while in contact with the bloom. Anyone who comes into contact with blue-green algae should wash with soap and water or rinse thoroughly with clean water. Swimming, bathing or showering with water not visibly affected by a blue-green algae bloom is not expected to cause health effects.

The health unit and the Ministry of Environment, Conservation and Parks will continue to work together to monitor the algal bloom and updates will be provided on our website www.smdhu.org.

For further information, call Your Health Connection Monday to Friday 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. at 705-721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520. Links to general information and updates about blue-green algae are available on the health unit website at www.simcoemuskokahealth.org.

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