

# Blue Green Algae

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## The Issue

Blue-Green algae has been a particular problem again in a number of areas, this summer but what are the risks and what are sensible precautions?

## The Outcome

Blue Green Algae are natural organisms that appear in many ponds, lakes, lochs and canals especially during hot weather spells. Many activity providers are already aware that the waters they use may contain blue green algae, and some pieces of water are closed to water sports because of it.

Sophisticated water aeration systems have been installed in some places and barley straw bales may work well in smaller pieces of water to alleviate the problem.

The toxicity of the algal bloom varies tremendously. It is known to kill dogs and farm animals that drink the water. There are examples of harm to humans too, with skin rashes or worse, especially if large amounts are ingested, for example in capsizes, or swimming/jumping in exercises. These exposures have not led to long-term effects or death but, in some cases, the illnesses were severe.

In many larger lakes, the bloom tends to appear close to the shore.

An awareness of the bloom and avoidance of ingestion by humans would be a reasonable precaution. For water sports, that might mean less of a splash about at the end of a session, with planned capsize drills kept to areas with no algal bloom.

If a participant is thought to have ingested much water, a warning to watch for any effects in the coming days is advised, when medical attention should be sought.

[The Environment Agency produces a useful small leaflet for information](#) 

[1]

## Link URLs in this page

1. The Environment Agency produces a useful small leaflet for information  
<http://publications.environment-agency.gov.uk/epages/eapublications.storefront/4c7f5a9200316ade273fc0a8029606ad/Product/View/GEHO0809BRGN&2DE&2DE>