

The Corporation of the
County of Prince Edward



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NEWS RELEASE

Blue-Green Algae Alert

Picton, ON – Residents on the north shore of Prince Edward County are being alerted about the potential health risks associated with blue-green algae blooms in the Bay of Quinte. Fire Fighters from the Prince Edward County Fire Department will be hand delivering information packages to all waterfront households from Carrying Place to Highway 49, in co-operation with the Hastings & Prince Edward Counties Health Unit. The same information will be available on the County website at www.pecounty.on.ca or by contacting the Health Unit at 613-966-5500.

What people should know and do to avoid adverse health effects:

- Water from municipal systems is safe to use for all purposes. These systems are closely monitored for water quality.
- Neither people nor animals should consume water that is drawn either directly or by shore well in areas affected by the blue-green algae bloom. Alternate sources of drinking water should be used by both people and animals.
- People and animals should avoid skin contact with water affected by the blue-green algae bloom.
- Blue-green algae toxins, if present in sufficient amounts, can cause headaches, fever, diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting, skin rashes and mucous membrane irritation.
- The negative health effects of blue-green algae are not critical or life-threatening.
- Boiling, chlorination and ultra-violet treatments will not make water affected by blue-green algae usable and may enhance the release of toxins.
- The affected water is not safe for cooking.
- Bathing or showering in contaminated water should be avoided, as skin contact with the algae can lead to skin irritation and rashes.
- If there is a safe source of water available, do not use contaminated water for washing clothes or dishes. If no alternative supply is available, use rubber gloves to avoid direct contact with the water.
- Avoid swimming or wading in affected areas, particularly when a noticeable green surface scum or green discolouration of the water is observed.
- Anyone who has recently been in direct contact with the waters of the Bay of Quinte near the affected area and is experiencing headaches, fever, diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting, should contact a physician.

For more information on blue-green algae see:

<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/5087.pdf> (<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/5087.pdf>)
<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/5089.pdf> <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/water-eau/cyanobacter-eng.php> http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/diseases/cyanobacteria/en/
<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/cons/5087>