

State of New Mexico  
Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department

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## News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## State Parks Issues Notice of Blue-Green Algae at Bluewater Lake State Park

SANTA FE – New Mexico State Parks has issued a notice for the presence of Blue-Green Algae at Bluewater Lake State Park. Blue-Green Algae were found to be in the lake late this week. State Parks is advising visitors who swim at Bluewater Lake State Park of possible health risks associated with exposure to blue-green algae – a naturally occurring organism in lakes that can produce toxins but is short lived. As a precaution, State Parks is posting notices at Bluewater Lake State Park and distributing flyers to visitors. (See attached Flyer)

Blue green algae occur naturally in lakes throughout the state and rarely produces blooms with the toxic characteristics. Most blue-green algae are safe; however, people should be aware that toxic conditions can exist and should limit their contact with blue-green algae as much as possible.

To guard against exposure, consider the following precautions:

- When boating, water skiing or swimming, don't come in contact with water that is discolored or where excessive foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water are visible
- Avoid swimming in areas with large quantities of algae
- Shower or rinse off with clean water after swimming and prior to food preparation and eating
- Rinse pets off with clean water instead of allowing pets to groom themselves
- Bring clean water for pets and keep them away from the lake
- Never drink untreated surface water, whether or not algae blooms are present
- Seek immediate medical attention if symptoms occur after possible exposure

Blue-green algae can form anytime, particularly in the summer or early fall when conditions include the presence of warm, shallow, nutrient rich water that receives a lot of sunlight. Though not normally toxic, algae can produce toxins which can make humans and animals sick when consumed or contact is made with skin.

Toxic algae blooms are usually localized, sporadic and last a very short amount of time. Algal blooms are often linked to high levels of nitrogen and phosphate, which come from nutrient rich farm runoff, storm water runoff and treated waste water. Algae might be present in water that is visibly discolored and can include shades of green, blue-green, yellow, brown or red.

Ingestion of, or exposure to, the toxins can result in a rash, hives, or skin blisters in humans. Other symptoms can include runny eyes and nose, dizziness and severe abdominal pain; sore throat, tingling of the lips or extremities, asthma-like symptoms, or allergic reaction; acute gastroenteritis, including diarrhea and vomiting, liver toxicity, kidney toxicity or neurotoxicity. Symptoms may take minutes to days after exposure to show up in people or animals.

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*The Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department provides resource protection and renewable energy resource development services to the public and other state agencies.*

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# NOTICE

## POTENTIAL HEALTH RISKS FROM BLUE-GREEN ALGAE

New Mexico lakes and reservoirs have blue-green algae (cyanobacteria). Under certain conditions blue-green algae can produce toxins that have been linked to human and animal illnesses. Blue-green algae blooms can occur anytime, but most often occur in late summer or early fall. Not every algae bloom results in a toxic condition. Toxic events are not predictable and you cannot tell if a bloom is toxic by looking at it.

### SYMPTOMS OF ILLNESS:

- **Rash, hives, or skin blisters.**
- **Runny eyes and nose, sore throat, asthma-like symptoms, or allergic reaction.**
- **Acute, severe abdominal pain, diarrhea and/or vomiting, and nervous system effects including dizziness and numbness.**
- **Symptoms may take minutes to days after exposure to show up in people or animals.**

### PREVENTION:

- **Don't swim, water ski, or boat in areas where the water is discolored or where you see foam, scum, or mats of algae on the water.**
- **If you, your children, pets or livestock do swim in water suspected to contain blue-green algae, rinse off with fresh water as soon as possible.**
- **Avoid swallowing, ingesting, or inhaling water from algal bloom areas.**

**GET MEDICAL TREATMENT IMMEDIATELY IF YOU THINK YOU, YOUR CHILDREN, YOUR PET, OR YOUR LIVESTOCK MIGHT HAVE BEEN EXPOSED.**

### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:

**New Mexico Department of Health  
New Mexico Environment Department  
New Mexico State Parks Division  
New Mexico Department Game & Fish  
New Mexico Poison Control Center**

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