

How Can Dogs Be Exposed?

When toxins are present, dogs can be exposed by drinking the water, by eating washed up mats or scum of toxic algae, or by having

skin contact with water. After leaving the water, dogs can also be poisoned by grooming their fur and paws. **If you suspect your dog has been exposed, seek immediate veterinary care.**



A cyanobacterial bloom in Lake Erie. It's impossible to tell visually, by taste or odor whether such a bloom is toxic (a HAB). Water samples must be analyzed for the presence of toxins. Photo credit: Ohio Sea Grant.

Report Possible HABs in NY:

NYSDEC:

Email: HABsInfo@dec.ny.gov
<https://bit.ly/nysdechabs>

NYS Dept of Health:

Email: harmfulalgae@health.ny.gov

More Resources

New York Sea Grant

www.nyseagrant.org/habs

Cornell Animal Health

<https://bit.ly/cornellanimalhealthhabs>

GET HELP!

If you suspect your dog has been exposed, seek immediate veterinary care.

24/7 Emergency Hotlines:

Pet Poison Helpline

Phone: 855-764-7661

\$85 per incident fee

<https://bit.ly/pethelplinehabs>

Also available as iPhone app

ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center

Phone: 888-426-4435

\$65 consultation fee

<https://bit.ly/aspcapetcarehabs>

Cornell Veterinary Emergency Hotline

Phone: 607-253-3060

<https://bit.ly/cornellvethabs>



For more information from NY Sea Grant

Contact:

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New York Sea Grant is part of a nationwide network of 34 university-based programs working with coastal communities through the National Oceanic Atmospheric Administration (NOAA). Sea Grant research and outreach programs promote better understanding, conservation, and use of America's coastal resources. Sea Grant is funded in New York through SUNY and Cornell University and federally through NOAA.



What is Harmful Algae?

Harmful algae can occur floating in the water column or be attached to the bottom of the lake or river. In freshwater, common pelagic (in the water column) harmful algal blooms (HABs) are caused by overgrowths of cyanobacteria (blue-green algae). They can cause water quality issues and can sometimes produce toxins that can be dangerous to people and pets.



Drone image of a HAB event on Port Bay, Lake Ontario. Photo credit: Roy Widrig.

How to Identify Harmful Algae

You can't tell if a bloom is toxic by looking at it, but some signs may include: discolored water (appearing blue, green, brown, or red), a "spilled paint" appearance, and/or scum/floating mat on the surface or shoreline.

What is Benthic Algae?

Benthic algae (algae that grows on the lake or river bottom) can also produce toxins, which can be even more potent than those found in traditional HABs. Benthic algae can be attached to debris or wash up in clumps where your pet may encounter it on the shore.

What Are Some Signs of Poisoning?

If your dog has been in a body of water with a suspected or identified HAB or other toxic algal bloom, closely monitor for symptoms, which can occur anywhere from minutes to several hours after exposure.

Look for the following symptoms:

- repeated vomiting
- diarrhea or bloody stool
- collapse
- pale gums
- abdominal swelling (tender to touch)
- excessive drooling
- stumbling, seizures, convulsions
- paralysis
- rigid muscles
- difficulty breathing
- skin rashes, hives



How Do I Prevent Exposure?

When possible, use a leash and don't let your dog wade, swim, or eat/drink material in water with an algal bloom.

If you think your dog has been exposed:

1. Remove them from the water immediately
2. Don't let them lick their fur or paws
3. Rinse or wash them with fresh water
4. Dry them thoroughly with a clean towel
5. Use gloves for protection if you can

Then monitor for symptoms!