

Blue-Green Algae Advice for Canoeists



Love Your Lakes



scum: skin rashes, eye irritation, vomiting, diarrhoea, fever, pains in muscles and joints.

There have been no reports of long term effects or deaths in humans, but in some cases the illnesses were severe. The toxins are also poisonous to animals and can cause severe illness and death.

What are blue-green algae?

Blue-green algae are just one of a number of algal species that live naturally in inland waters. But when conditions are just right – still water, too much nutrient (phosphate), calm, hot and sunny weather – they reproduce rapidly and very quickly out-compete other plant life to dominate the lake causing scums and blooms. The algae are unsightly and can be toxic to people and pets.

What to look out for

Water may be discoloured green, blue-green or greenish brown and look like paint or jelly. There may be musty, earthy or grassy odours and sometimes foaming can be seen on the shore-line.

Health implications

Unfortunately it is not possible to tell from looking whether or not a bloom or scum is harmful but as there's a 1 in 2 chance of it being so, it's best to assume that all blooms and scums are toxic. The following illnesses have occurred in some people who have swum through or swallowed algal



What to do

Although algal blooms are not always harmful it's a sensible precaution to avoid contact with the blooms and the water close to them. You should: avoid entering the water where a bloom is visible, avoid drinking or swallowing water, cover cuts and abrasions before entering the water.

Pet owners should ensure that their animals do not have access to the affected water.

Who to tell

If you notice blue-green algae you should immediately notify the Environment Agency on **0800 80 70 60**.

Do your bit to help reduce phosphates

Blue-green algae are a problem that will never be totally eradicated. However you can do your bit to help reduce the levels of phosphates entering the lakes. When you're staying in the areas around the lakes always use phosphate-free laundry and dishwashing detergents.

In the Lake District, many partnership organisations are currently working successfully together to improve water quality. This leaflet is intended as a guide to the facts about blue-green algae but above all, to allow you to safely enjoy the many beautiful stretches of open water the Lake District has to offer!



www.loveyourlakes.org

