

LOOK OUT FOR HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

A **harmful algal bloom (HAB)** is an overgrowth of algae in a water body that could affect water quality and aquatic life. Some HABs produced by bacteria can create toxins that may also harm people, animals, and the local environment.



HOW TO IDENTIFY A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM



Algal blooms can make the water appear green, brown, gold, or red. They often produce scum, mats, foam, or paint-like streaks in the water or dumps on the shore. However, only professional water testing can confirm if HABs and toxins are present. State and local governments often test water for bacteria or toxins to protect water quality as part of their water quality standards program.

WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY OUT!

STAY AWAY FROM THE WATER WHEN YOU SUSPECT A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM IS PRESENT.



DON'T
Play with scum or mats on the shore



DON'T
Let animals drink water, eat algae, or swim



DON'T
Swim



DON'T
Fish or wade



DON'T
Boat or kayak

WHO CAN GET SICK FROM A HAB?



Adults and children



Household pets



Livestock



Fish and shellfish

ROUTES & SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE TO HABs

SYMPTOMS CAN VARY DEPENDING ON HOW THE PERSON OR ANIMAL WAS EXPOSED, AND WHETHER THE HAB IS IN SALT OR FRESH WATER.

ROUTES OF EXPOSURE



SKIN CONTACT



INGESTION



INHALATION

SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE



Ear, eye, nose, skin, and throat irritation, and headache



Paralysis, respiratory illness, and seizures



Abdominal pain, diarrhea, liver and kidney damage, and vomiting



Drooling, diarrhea, low energy, not eating, stumbling, tremors, and vomiting

WHAT TO DO IF EXPOSED TO A HAB



See a doctor or vet if symptoms occur



Contact your poison control center for advice

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT POSSIBLE HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS: EMAIL US AT BBMWD@BBMWD.NET



IDENTIFYING A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM (HAB)

This quick guide provides a visual comparison of appearance and color and odor that can be helpful in distinguishing non-toxic green algae and aquatic plants from potentially toxic cyanobacteria blooms or harmful algal blooms (HABs).

Non-toxic Algae & Plants

Cyanobacteria/HAB

APPEARANCE



Rooted Plants



Floating Plants



Plant-like Algae



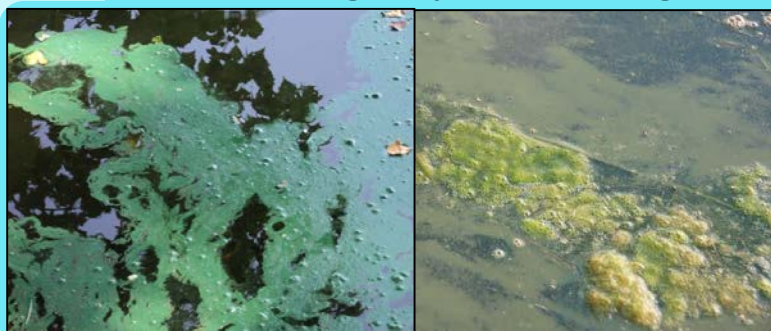
Filamentous Algae



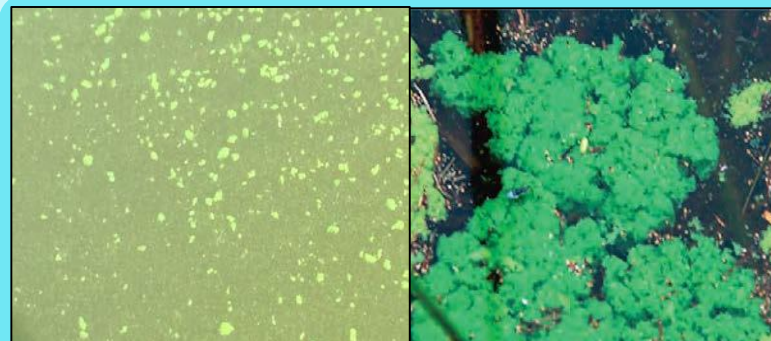
Paint or Soup



Scum, Bubbling or Spit-like Floating Foam



Lettuce or Chopped Grass



Spires



Mats



Blobs



ATTENTION: Cyanobacteria blooms/HABs can produce toxins that are harmful to humans and animals.

Non-toxic Algae & Plants

Cyanobacteria/HAB

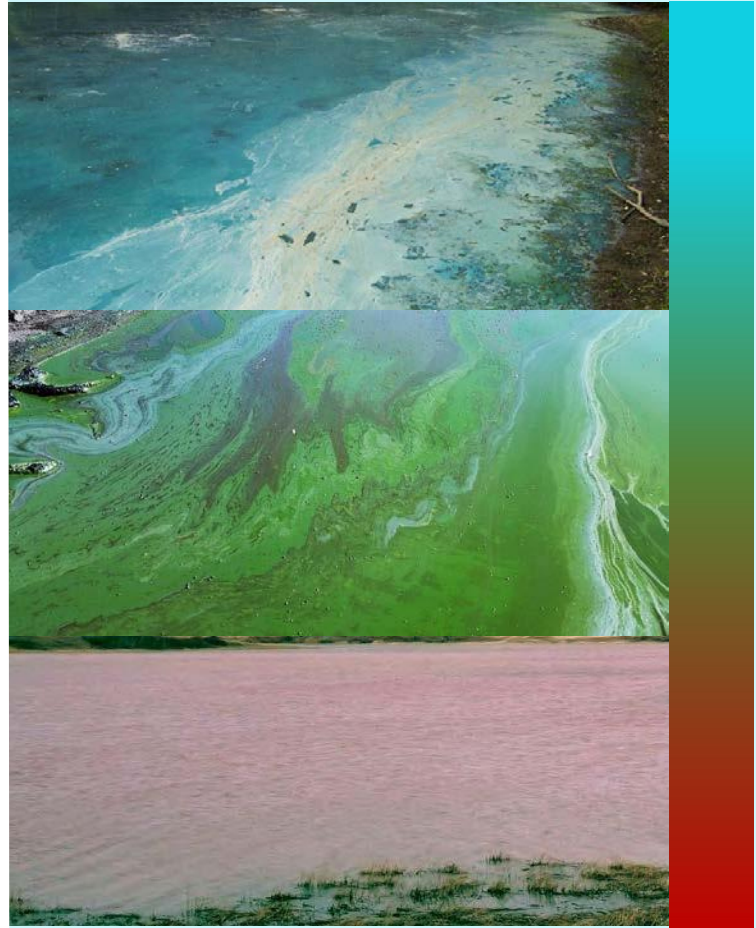
COLOR



Algae and aquatic plants are usually green but can appear yellow or brown as they die down.



Cyanobacteria get their name from their blue-green pigment but blooms can often look green, blue-green, green-brown, or red.



ODOR



Algae and aquatic plants are usually neutral or leafy in scent, but when dying or dead smell musty/rotting.



Cyanobacteria blooms can have a distinctive smell, sometimes described as gasoline, septic or fishy.

Have you seen a HAB?



Report HABs online! <http://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/do/bloomreport.html>



Or call 1(844) 729-6466



Find out more on the California HABs Portal
<http://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs>

Need more help with identification?

<http://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/resources/field.html>