



# Blue-Green Algae

Blue-Green Algae (Cyanobacteria) can occur on any body of water anytime but are seen mostly during summer months. Some blooms may contain toxins that are released in the water when the cells break down.

## *If you suspect a blue-green algae bloom:*

- Call the **Spills Action Centre at 1-800-268-6060** to report it
- Ensure children and pets are kept out of the water as they can become very ill
- Do not use the water for recreational activities where your skin comes into contact with the water
- Do **not** use the water for drinking. Do not boil - use another safe source of water
- Do not consume fish or their organs, which have been caught in water where a bloom is occurring
- Notify your Lake Association and neighbours to make them aware.

## *Health Risks of Exposure to Blue-Green Algae Toxins:*

- Skin contact with toxins in the water can cause itchy and irritated eyes and skin
- Drinking the water or eating fish that contain blue-green algae toxins can cause headaches, fever, abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting and if concentrations are high, serious health problems may occur.



## *Determining When to Resume Recreational Use:*



Photos courtesy of the Ministry of Environment

- Check your local conditions to determine when to resume recreational use of the water as each property has different water conditions and flow patterns
- Faster moving water will dilute and move the toxins out of an area more quickly, further decreasing the risk to health
- Skin irritation is the first sign that the level of toxins is significant in the water, so if this occurs, it is important not to go in the water. A few more days will help to clear the water if it is moving well, unless another bloom has occurred.

