



Panhandle Health District

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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 30, 2016



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Health Advisory Issued for Avondale Lake

KOOTENAI CO., ID -- Panhandle Health District (PHD) and the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) have issued a health advisory for Avondale Lake. PHD is urging the public to use caution when recreating in or near the water.

Water quality monitoring confirmed the presence of cyanobacteria, commonly known as blue-green algae. At this time, water surrounding the public access point along the south side of the lake is most severely impacted. Blue-green algal blooms have the potential to produce dangerous toxins in areas of the lakes. Pets, children, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems are most at-risk of harmful exposure.

Blue-green algae are naturally-occurring, microscopic bacteria. Harmful algal blooms (HABs) typically occur during the warm summer months, when toxin-producing algae proliferate under certain oxygen and nutrient conditions. The physical appearance of blue-green algal blooms can be unsightly, often presenting in discolored water, streaks or globs of scum and causing thick green mats along lake shorelines.

Anyone recreating near Avondale Lake is advised to take precautions and prevent people and pets from exposure to lake water appearing to contain blue-green algae. Property owners utilizing the lake as a drinking water source are cautioned that potentially present toxins cannot be removed by boiling or filtering the water. If contact (swimming, bathing, or showering) has been made with water containing blue-green algae, it is recommended to wash off with fresh water.

If people choose to eat fish from the lake, it is recommended that they remove all fat, skin and organs before cooking, since toxins are more likely to collect in those tissues.

Symptoms of exposure to algal toxins vary according to exposure. Symptoms include rashes, hives, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing, and/or wheezing. More severe symptoms affecting the liver and nervous system may result from ingestion of water. If symptoms persist, consult with your health care provider.

The public will be advised when the concern no longer exists. DEQ is working with residents and landowners to implement nutrient reduction projects to improve overall water quality and limit the frequency and duration of these algal blooms.

Health advisories for [Fernan Lake](#) and [Hayden Lake](#) are still active at this time. Updated information on harmful algae blooms in northern Idaho can be found online at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/blue-green-algae/>.

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