



Panhandle Health District

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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Health Advisory Issued for Black Lake



(Algae along the shores of Black Lake on November 7, 2016)

KOOTENAI CO., ID -- Panhandle Health District (PHD), the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe have issued a health advisory for Black 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. Blue-green algal blooms have the potential to produce dangerous toxins in areas of the lake. 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. 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 Black Lake is advised to take precautions to avoid 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, landowners and the Coeur d'Alene Tribe to implement nutrient reduction projects to improve overall water quality and limit the frequency and duration of these algal blooms.

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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