



## Panhandle Health District

*Healthy People in Healthy Communities*



### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **Health Advisory Issued for Lower Twin Lake**

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

Water quality monitoring confirmed the presence of cyanobacteria, also known as a harmful algae bloom (HAB). HABs have the potential to produce dangerous toxins in areas of the lake. The physical appearance of these blooms can be unsightly, often presenting in discolored water, streaks, or globs of scum and causing thick green mats along lake shorelines. Pets, children, the elderly, and people with compromised immune systems are most at-risk of harmful exposure.

“A complaint came in of a scum formation along the northeast shoreline of Lower Twin Lake,” said Kristin Larson, Water Quality Analyst for the Idaho Department of Environmental Quality. “A sample was taken from the public boat ramp on west Twin Lakes Road. We will continue to monitor Twin Lakes throughout the duration of this bloom.”

PHD and DEQ ask the public to keep in mind that wind and weather can change the location and severity of a HAB quickly, so when in doubt, stay out!

Anyone recreating near Twin Lakes is advised to take precautions to avoid exposure to lake water appearing to contain a HAB. 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 a HAB, 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 areas of the fish.

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 of the lake.

Updated information on harmful algae blooms in northern Idaho can be found online at <http://www.deq.idaho.gov/water-quality/surface-water/recreation-health-advisories/cyanobacteria-harmful-algal-blooms/>. Also, follow [www.facebook.com/PanhandleHealth/](http://www.facebook.com/PanhandleHealth/) for updates.

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