What are cyanobacteria?
- Cyanobacteria, sometimes called blue-green algae, are microscopic organisms that live in all types of water.

What is a cyanobacteria blooms?
- Cyanobacteria grow quickly, or bloom, when the water is warm, slow-moving, and full of nutrients.

What are some characteristics of cyanobacteria blooms?
- Cyanobacteria usually bloom during the summer and fall. However, they can bloom anytime during the year.
- When a bloom occurs, scum might form on the water's surface.
- Blooms can be many different colors, from green or blue to red or brown.
- As the bloom dies off, you might smell an odor that is similar to rotting plants.

What is a toxic bloom?
- Sometimes, cyanobacteria produce toxins.
- The toxins can be present in the cyanobacteria cells or in the water.

Other important things to know:
- Swallowing water that has cyanobacteria or cyanobacterial toxins in it can cause serious illness.
- Dogs might have more severe symptoms than people, including collapse and sudden death after swallowing the contaminated water while swimming or after licking cyanobacteria from their fur.
- There are no known antidotes to these toxins. Medical care is supportive.

You cannot tell if a bloom is toxic by looking at it.

To report a cyanobacteria bloom or related health event:
- Call your local or state health department

For more information:
- [http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab/default.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab/default.htm)
What we know about exposure to cyanobacteria and cyanotoxins and possible health effects

Information about human health effects from exposure to cyanobacteria and toxins is primarily derived from a few epidemiology studies of recreational exposures; studies with laboratory animals; reports of extreme human exposure events, such as the use of toxin-contaminated dialysis water; and from animal (e.g., cattle and pet dog) exposures. References are available at: http://www.cdc.gov/nceh/hsb/hab/default.htm

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL EXPOSURE ROUTE</th>
<th>INFORMATION SOURCE FOR POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS</th>
<th>POSSIBLE SYMPTOMS AND SIGNS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Swallowing water contaminated with cyanobacteria or toxins                               | Data from laboratory animal studies, extreme human exposure events, and animal exposures                           | **Hepatotoxins and nephrotoxins**  
  • Nausea, vomiting, diarrhea  
  • Bad taste in mouth  
  • Acute hepatitis, jaundice  
  • Blood in urine or dark urine  
  • Malaise, lethargic  
  • Headache, fever  
  • Loss of appetite  
  **Neurotoxins**  
  • Progression of muscle twitches  
  • For saxitoxin: high doses may lead to progressive muscle paralysis |
| Skin contact with water that is contaminated with cyanobacteria or toxins                 | Data from human studies                                                                                           | **Skin contact**  
  • Allergic dermatitis (including rash, itching and blisters)  
  • Conjunctivitis                                                                                              |
| Inhaling aerosols contaminated with cyanobacteria or toxins                              | Anecdotal evidence from human exposures and data from human studies                                             | **Upper respiratory irritation (wheezing, coughing, chest tightness, shortness of breath)** |