LOOK OUT FOR HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS

A **harmful algal bloom (HAB)** is an overgrowth of algae in a water body that could affect water quality and aquatic life. Some HABs produced by bacteria can create toxins that may also harm people, animals, and the local environment.

HOW TO IDENTIFY A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM

Algal blooms can make the water appear green, brown, gold or red. They often produce scum, mats, foam, or paint-like streaks in the water or clumps on the shore. However, only professional water testing can confirm if HABs and toxins are present. State and local governments often test water for bacteria or toxins to protect water quality as part of their water quality standards program.

WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY OUT!

STAY AWAY FROM THE WATER WHEN YOU SUSPECT A HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM IS PRESENT.

DON'T Play with scum or mats on the shore

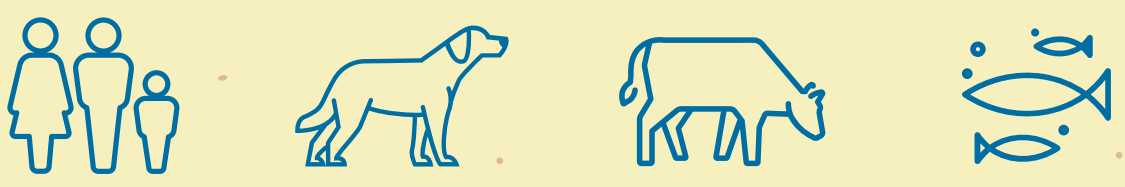
DON'T Let animals drink water, eat algae, or swim

DON'T Swim

DON'T Fish or wade

DON'T Boat or kayak

WHO CAN GET SICK FROM A HAB?



Adults and children

Household pets

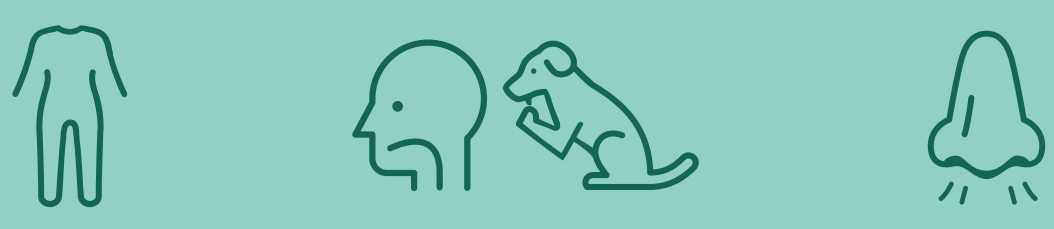
Livestock

Fish and shellfish

ROUTES & SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE TO HABs

SYMPTOMS CAN VARY DEPENDING ON HOW THE PERSON OR ANIMAL WAS EXPOSED, AND WHETHER THE HAB IS IN SALT OR FRESH WATER.

ROUTES OF EXPOSURE



SKIN CONTACT

INGESTION

INHALATION

SYMPTOMS OF EXPOSURE

Ear, eye, headache, skin, throat and nose irritation

Paralysis, respiratory illness and seizures

Abdominal pain, diarrhea, liver and kidney damage and vomiting

Drooling, diarrhea, low energy, not eating, stumbling, tremors and vomiting

WHAT TO DO IF EXPOSED TO A HAB

See a doctor or vet if symptoms occur

Contact your poison control center for advice

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT POSSIBLE HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS:

(217) 782-3362

www2.illinois.gov/epa/topics/water-quality/monitoring/algal-bloom/Pages

ILLINOIS ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

EPA