

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOM (HAB) SEASON

Algae blooms begin in May and can occur through October or later. Reports mostly coincide with the longest periods of light and warmest water temperatures, and typically flourish in nutrient loaded water bodies. Three holiday weekends when public waters are most used fall in times when HAB are likely to occur:



- Memorial Day
- Independence day
- Labor Day

In 2012 Kansas experienced HAB involving 26 reported water bodies. There were no confirmed cases of human illness from HAB.

Animals (pets and livestock) that swim in or drink water affected by HAB or eat dried algae along beaches are seriously affected. In 2011 there were five dogs that died from cyanobacterial toxicosis due to exposure to a HAB in Kansas.

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Our Mission:
To protect and improve the health
and environment of all Kansans.



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Kansas Environmental Health and "LIKE" us.



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For the latest Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) advisories visit:
www.kdheks.gov/algae-illness/index.htm

VETERINARIAN'S GUIDE

HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS (HAB)



WHAT ARE HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS?

Cyanobacteria, or blue-green algae, are bacteria that grow in water and are photosynthetic. They are usually too small to be seen, but sometimes can form colonies. Blooms occur in fresh water when the bacteria grow exuberantly and produce toxins that cause acute illness and death in animals when ingested. Animals can be exposed to toxins while wading, playing, swallowing affected water, or inhaling water droplets while enjoying high-speed activities such as boating.



Some blooms can look like foam or scum on the surface of fresh water lakes and ponds. The blooms can be blue, green, brown or red and may look like paint floating on the water.

ROLE OF THE KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENT

KDHE does not routinely monitor all water bodies in the state. KDHE responds to reports of HABs from lake managers, environmental professionals, public health officials, or citizens. Based on test results of water samples, KDHE provides recommendations to the lake managers. In rare cases, where HAB represent an extreme threat to the health of the public, KDHE may recommend the closure of a lake.

VETERINARIAN'S CAN:

Educate staff and clients: Keep animals, and people, away from HABs. Know where to find information about current advisories:

www.kdheks.gov/algae-illness/algae_advisories.htm

Know the signs of cyanobacterial toxicosis. Onset of signs within minutes to hours of exposure can include;

Vomiting	Diarrhea	General Weakness
Convulsions	Jaundice	Seizures
High Liver Enzymes		Respiratory Paralysis

Treat the patient: Oral cholestyramine, a bile acid sequestrant, has been successfully used to treat a dog with acute cyanobacterial toxicosis. Consider the use of cholestyramine, in addition to supportive care, when treating patients.

Take care of you and your staff: Dried algae may be found on the paws and coat of an animal that has been exposed to a HAB. Direct contact with this material may cause an allergic reaction in people. Wash all exposed areas with soap and water. Contact your physician if you develop symptoms.

Report cases to KDHE: Animals, especially dogs, can be a sentinel for HAB-related events. Veterinarians are encouraged to report all cases of cyanobacterial toxicosis in animals to KDHE via the online report form or by calling the EpiHotline at: 1-877-427-7317.

PRIVATE WATER BODIES

Water samples from private water bodies can be submitted to the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory for a small fee. For more information, please contact the Kansas State Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at 866-512-5650.

REPORTING ANIMAL ILLNESS OR DEATH

KDHE recommends the use of the online Animal Illness Reporting Form located at www.kdheks.gov. Click the Blue Green Algae button to report suspected HAB-related animal illness. Questions about this form? Please call KDHE - Bureau of Epidemiology and Public Health Informatics at : 1-877-427-7317 or email epihotline@kdheks.gov.

HAB AND HEALTH IMPACTS

Microcystin, a hepatotoxin, is the most commonly found cyanotoxin in Kansas lakes. The first signs of cyanobacterial toxicosis in animals usually occurs within 30 minutes of ingestion and include; vomiting, diarrhea, anorexia, lethargy, and depression. Liver failure often occurs; ALT levels can range from 3,000—60,000 u/L. Cyanobacterial toxicosis is often fatal. Dogs should not be allowed near the shore where decaying algae may be visible as the algae may stick to their feet. Should dogs lick their paws, they could ingest enough toxin to cause death. Horses, cattle and other animals are also susceptible to toxins and should not drink water from ponds or lakes with cyanobacteria.

