

blue green algae?

dodge it!

Don't wade, swim or swallow water where there are algae blooms

With so many places in Florida to explore, we sometimes forget our beaches, lakes and rivers are natural places that change with the seasons. Enjoy Florida's wild and not-so-wild areas, and know when to swim it, shore it or dodge it.

Blue green algae are tiny organisms naturally found in all types of water

Blue green algae (also known as cyanobacteria) can grow in many of Florida's waterbodies. Large concentrations, called blooms, can change the water color to blue, green, brown, orange or red. Blooms can appear year-round but are more frequent in summer and fall.

Algae blooms can look like a thick mat

Blue green algae can grow rapidly and sometimes form a foamy surface scum and an unpleasant odor.

Stay away from blooms

Swimming in water with blue green algae blooms may cause ear, eye and skin reactions, and hay fever and flu-like symptoms (including diarrhea)—these reactions aren't common. Because blooms can remove oxygen from the water, fish kills can occur.

Learn more

Visit FloridaHealth.gov or call the Florida Poison Information Hotline (toll-free):

1-800-222-1222.

9,000+ miles of SALTY & FRESH Florida shoreline Know when to:

swim it

With a buddy.
When safety flags
& signs say
thumbs-up!

Don't swallow, swim or wade in water where there are algae blooms. Don't use personal watercraft, water ski or boat in waters where there are severe algae.

Wash your skin and clothing with soap and water if you have contact with algae, discolored or smelly water. Contact your doctor if rashes, diarrhea or other symptoms occur after swimming in areas with algae.

Pets and livestock should have a different source of water when algae blooms are present. Animals can experience serious health impacts from drinking contaminated water, or licking and swallowing algae while cleaning their fur. Contact a veterinarian if your pet or livestock becomes lethargic, has diarrhea or spasms.

Don't cook or clean dishes with water contaminated by algae blooms. Boiling water will not eliminate chemicals from the algae.

Don't fill your pool or use an outdoor shower from water sources with algal blooms.

Fillets from healthy fish caught in freshwater lakes affected by a bloom are safe to eat.

Blue green algae supplements are generally safe to use as directed. Check with the manufacturer to ensure that the product is free of chemicals that could make you sick.

shore it

If you have a cut
on your skin,
your immune system
is weak, or
you don't have
a buddy with you.

dodge it

Stay clear of living
things near the shoreline
& in the water like
mosquitoes &
algae blooms.