

BLUE GREEN ALGAE

have you been
slimed?

TOP 10 BLUE GREEN ALGAE FACTS

- 1.** Blue green algae, also called cyanobacteria, are tiny organisms naturally found in all types of water.
- 2.** Algal blooms can look like a thick mat or foamy scum. Blooms can change the water color to blue, green, brown, orange, or red and may give off an unpleasant odor.
- 3.** Not all blue green algae are found on the water surface. Some attach to aquatic plants, while some grow along the bottom.
- 4.** Algal blooms can appear year-round but are more frequent in summer and fall.
- 5.** There are hundreds of types of these algae and many are known to produce natural chemicals called toxins.
- 6.** Blue green algae sometimes produce toxins and other times do not. It is not known why this happens. You cannot look at a bloom and tell if it is toxic.
- 7.** Swimming in blooms can result in ear, eye and skin reactions. Reactions are not very common but can also include hay-fever like symptoms and/or flu-like symptoms including diarrhea.
- 8.** Even non-toxic algae can create problems in the water environment. Blooms can remove oxygen from the water causing large fish kills.
- 9.** To learn more about blue green algae issues go to www.myfloridaeh.com and choose aquatic toxins.
- 10.** To report human illness or for questions related to human health call the Florida Poison Information Hotline (toll-free): 1-800-222-1222.

don't get **slimed** or sick from **BLUE GREEN ALGAE**

HEALTH AND SAFETY TIPS:

- 1.** Do not swallow, swim or wade in water where algae blooms are present. 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.
- 2.** Keep pets away from algae mats. Pet illness and death have been linked to pets drinking from contaminated water or licking and swallowing algae while cleaning their fur. Contact a veterinarian if the pet becomes lethargic, has diarrhea or convulsions.
- 3.** Do not use personal watercraft, water ski or boat in areas with severe algae blooms.
- 4.** Never drink from untreated water. Do not cook with or clean dishes with untreated water. Boiling water will not eliminate blue green algae toxins. You cannot see, smell or taste all algal toxins. Pets and livestock should have a different source of water when algae blooms are present.
- 5.** Do not fill your pool or use an outdoor shower from water sources with algal blooms. Illness has been reported when these toxins become aerosolized.
- 6.** Fillets (muscle) from healthy fish caught in freshwater lakes affected by a bloom are safe to eat.
- 7.** Blue green algae supplements are generally safe to use as directed; however, checking with the manufacturer to ensure that the product is free of algae toxins is a good precaution.

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