

JEFFERSON COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE

HEALTH ADVISORY: BLUE-GREEN ALGAE

Avoid algae blooms on Butterfield Lake in the Town of Alexandria, Jefferson County NY

Media Contact: Stephen A. Jennings, Public Information Officer - 786-3710

The Jefferson County Public Health Service has issued a Blue-Green Algae Advisory for Butterfield Lake in the Town of Alexandria. This advisory is being issued because a blue-green algae bloom has been identified at shallow areas of the lake. People and animals should avoid any contact with any algae blooms, scums and colored water.

Blue-green algae, technically known as **cyanobacteria**, are microscopic organisms that are naturally present in lakes and streams. They usually are present in low numbers. Blue-green algae can become very abundant in warm, shallow, undisturbed surface water that receives a lot of sunlight. When this occurs, they can form blooms that discolor the water or produce floating rafts or scums on the surface of the water.

Ginger B. Hall, Jefferson County Director of Public Health stated “blue-green algae can cause skin or eye irritation, or diarrhea and vomiting if ingested. People and animals should stay out of the water where blooms are present.”

The department advises the public to take the following precautions:

- **Do not** swim, wade, or fish near blooms or scums.
- **Do not** drink the water.
- Keep children and animals away from any blooms or scums.
- Rinse with clean water if exposed.

Please seek medical attention should you develop symptoms that may be associated with exposure to blue-green algae blooms, such as skin or eye irritation, or diarrhea and vomiting. Primary care providers, urgent care centers, and hospital emergency departments have all received this advisory.

For more information, please visit the Jefferson County Public Health Service webpage at www.icphs.org or Facebook page at www.facebook.com/icphs. The public can also call the department at (315) 786-3720 to obtain information.

Learn more about blue-green algae online at:

<http://www.health.ny.gov/environmental/water/drinking/bluegreenalgae.htm>

or at <http://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html>.

For specific questions about blue-green algae discovered in Jefferson County lakes or streams, members of the public can call the Region 6 New York State Department of Environmental Conservation office in Watertown at 785-2513.

SAJ:HEALTH ADVISORY BLUE GREEN ALGAE.doc:7:18:13. MS M:/