



Department of Health
Agency of Human Services



Days of Undetected Blue Green Algae Blooms are Numbered



News Release: July 8, 2013

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BURLINGTON - The days of undetected blue-green algae blooms along Lake Champlain are numbered as more than 200 trained volunteer monitors will scan the waterway throughout the summer for signs of the thick, toxic, scummy blooms.

Working in partnership with the [Lake Champlain Committee](#) and the [Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation](#), the Health Department has developed a strong reporting system from spotters on the shoreline and upgraded its online blue green algae map.

"We have come a long way since the state first started tracking the blooms in the mid-1990s," said Andrew Chevrefils, Health Department environmental health risk coordinator. "We also regularly update our blue-green algae photo gallery throughout the summer."

The Lake Champlain Committee conducts all the monitor training and, along with the Department of Environmental Conservation, assists with surveillance and sample collections.

Algae sightings along four inland lakes with managed beach areas (Carmine, Elmore, Iroquois and Memphremagog) will also be posted weekly, and public beaches may be closed if blue green algae is visible.

Heat and low winds encourage blue-green algae growth and the recent wet, rainy weather has ensured an abundance of nutrients in the water. Peak season for the blooms is August.

Boaters, swimmers, water-skiers, waders, parents, and pet-owners should avoid contact with blue-green algae. Children are at higher risk because they are more likely to drink the water. Do not allow pets in algae-contaminated water because they may also drink the water and consume algae when they lick their fur.

Private camp and home owners should watch for algae present near their water intake, and never use algae contaminated water to prepare meals or brush teeth. Boiling water will not remove toxins.

The state's interactive lake status map, developed with funding from the Centers for Disease Control's [Environmental Public Health Tracking Program](#), is posted on the Vermont Department of Health website at: http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/bg_algae/weekly_status.aspx

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