

NEWS RELEASE



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Illinois Officials Confirm Algal Bloom on Portions of the Illinois River *Residents should continue to use caution when recreating and be aware of blue-green algae*

SPRINGFIELD – Following sampling on the Illinois River, Illinois officials have confirmed the presence of the algal toxin, microcystin, above the 4 parts per billion (ppb) health advisory established by U.S. EPA. An initial screening test conducted on a water sample taken last week near Hennepin indicated an elevated level of microcystin. The Illinois EPA's lab confirmed the microcystin level in the sample at 182 ppb; well above the health advisory limit. The confirmatory sample taken near Marseilles detected microcystin at 4.75 ppb, just slightly above the health advisory limit. Illinois EPA will conduct additional sampling this week to determine if conditions have improved along the Illinois River.

Sampling was also done at Illinois American Water-Peoria, the only public water supply using the Illinois River as a water source, which showed toxins are below the detection limit in finished water samples.

Algal toxins (e.g., microcystin and cylindrospermopsin) sometimes produced by blue-green algae can cause sickness or other adverse health effects in people and pets, depending on the amount and type of exposure. The very young, elderly, and people with compromised immune systems are most at risk. Adverse health effects attributable to algal toxins can occur from direct skin contact, swallowing contaminated water, or inhaling water droplets in the air. Symptoms of exposure include rashes, hives, diarrhea, vomiting, coughing or wheezing. More severe symptoms may result from longer or greater amounts of exposure.

As noted last week, people who plan to recreate in, on, or near Illinois rivers, lakes or streams are advised to avoid contact with water that:

- looks like spilled, green or blue-green paint
- has surface scums, mats, or films
- is discolored or has green-colored streaks
- has greenish globs suspended in the water below the surface

Do not let pets drink from water with any of the above characteristics.

Illinois River Algae/2

If you or your pet have come into contact with water you suspect may have a bloom of blue-green algae, rinse off with clean, fresh water as soon as possible. With all activities that may involve contact with lake or stream water, wash your hands before eating.

If you are concerned you have symptoms that are a result of exposure to algal toxins, contact your health care provider or call the Illinois Poison Center at 1-800-222-1222. If your pet experiences symptoms that may be a result of exposure, contact your veterinarian.

For additional information about harmful algal blooms, please visit:

Illinois Department of Public Health:

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/environmental-health-protection/toxicology/habs>

Illinois EPA:

<http://www.epa.illinois.gov/topics/water-quality/monitoring/algal-bloom/index>

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