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August 6, 2024 – LMAS District Health Department was notified by the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS) that an algal bloom suspected to be blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, or harmful algal blooms (HABS), was detected on the Brevort Lake near the north shore in Mackinac County. Samples will be sent to the MDHHS laboratory for testing. LMAS is recommending residents and visitors of the lake avoid water-related activities and keep pets from drinking or going in the lake water, in the area where the bloom is visible until sampling for testing is complete, or the bloom breaks up. Advisory signs have been posted at public access points around the lake.

It is not possible to determine whether algal blooms contain harmful toxins by looking at them, so it is best to avoid contact with any body of water that is covered with algal scums, mats or significant rafts of algae on the surface. You can search online at www.michigan.gov/habsmap for verified reports of harmful algal blooms in Michigan or contact EGLE at 800-662-9278 for more information about HABS and the environment.

Below are some steps to take when near waterways:

- Avoid direct contact with waterways that appear to be scummy or have a green shade to them. This includes swimming, boating, tubing, skiing, playing in or allowing pets in the water in active bloom areas.
- Do not drink untreated surface water
- Obey posted signage for public health advisories and/or beach closings
- Limit or avoid eating fish from algal bloom impacted areas

Contact with algae blooms can cause minor illness in humans but can be fatal to pets. Therefore, it is also recommended that people keep their pets out of the water that shows any signs of algae blooms.

People and pets can experience the following symptoms after exposure to algae blooms:

- Rash, hives, or skin blisters at skin contact site
- Runny eyes and/or nose, sore throat, asthma-like symptoms, or allergic reactions
- Diarrhea, vomiting, abdominal pain, weakness, tingling fingers, numbness,
- Dizziness, difficulty breathing, or even death resulting from ingesting contaminated water

If you think you have been exposed to algae blooms, take the following precautions:

- Immediately remove yourself and/or your pet from the area
- Take a shower and thoroughly rinse off pets with clean, fresh water if they swam in an area with algae blooms to avoid potential toxic ingestion from licking their fur

If you think you or your pet may have been exposed to or ingested algal toxins, seek medical treatment for yourself and/or veterinary treatment for your pet as soon as possible.

Algal blooms are a normal part of lake and pond cycle. Harmful algal blooms need sunlight, slow-moving water, and nutrients, like nitrogen and phosphorus. Nutrient pollution from human activities makes the problem worse, leading to more severe and more frequent blooms. You can help reduce nutrient pollution by:

- Choosing phosphate-free detergents, soaps, and household cleansers
- When walking your pet, pick up after them and keep their waste away from waterways and waterbodies
- Inspect your septic system annually to ensure proper function
- When washing vehicles and watercraft, use nontoxic, phosphate free soaps and wash them on grass or gravel to filter the runoff before it enters the lake or stream

Residents and visitors to water bodies are encouraged to report suspicious-looking algae to EGLE by calling the Environmental Assistance Center at 800-662-9278 or by emailing AlgaeBloom@michigan.gov. Sending photos is helpful to investigating staff. For more information on HABs and your health, contact MDHHS at 800-648-6942. For information about HABs and pets or livestock, call the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) at 800-292-3939. You may also contact LMAS at 906-643-1100 for more information and updates. LMAS will provide additional updates as we learn more information.