

## Blue-Green Algae Alert

**For Immediate Release:** July 8, 2010

**Media Contact:** Communication Office  
Vermont Department of Health  
802-863-7281

The current sunny, hot weather has created ideal growing conditions for blue-green algae blooms. Sightings of blooms have been reported from many areas of Lake Champlain, and parks and recreation departments are watching beaches closely. Anyone recreating on the lake should watch for dense blue-green algae accumulations, especially in calm, still water.

The Vermont Department of Health advises anyone recreating on the lake – boaters, swimmers, water-skiers, waders, parents, pet-owners and residents – to take precautions around algae blooms:

- Avoid all contact with algae-contaminated water.
- Do not swim or bathe in the water. Remember that children are at higher risk because they are more likely to drink the water.
- Monitor water intakes for private residences. If you see algae near the intake, switch to an alternate safe source of water.
- Do not use algae-contaminated water to prepare meals or brush teeth. Boiling water will not remove toxins.
- Do not allow pets in algae-contaminated water.

Exposing skin to some types of blue-green algae can irritate or cause allergic reactions. Drinking water containing algae that is producing toxins can cause nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. Anyone who has symptoms is advised to seek medical attention.

Swimming is not the only danger of exposure. People can also inhale or swallow blue-green algae when water skiing or using a jet ski.

No human cases of illness related to blue-green algae have been documented in Vermont since the Health Department and partner agencies – including the Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation, the University of Vermont Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources, and the Lake Champlain Committee – started a comprehensive surveillance and monitoring system in 1999.

Blooms on Lake Champlain or anywhere around the state can be reported by calling the Health Department at 1-800-439-8550 (VT only). Homeowner toxin test kits can be purchased from the Health Department Laboratory at 800-660-9997 (VT only).

The Health Department posts an online status map of algae blooms at routine monitoring sites on Lake Champlain, along with facts and photographs. The map is updated as the newest testing data is available.

[http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/bg\\_algae/bgalgae.aspx](http://healthvermont.gov/enviro/bg_algae/bgalgae.aspx)