

## Help prevent toxic algae blooms.

Animal waste, human waste, and fertilizers contain nutrients that algae need to grow. You can:

- Switch to organic fertilizer and use sparingly.
- Maintain your septic system and have it inspected regularly.
- Pick up after your pets, don't feed waterfowl, and keep livestock away from the water.
- Plant native plants between your yard and the water to reduce runoff and prevent erosion. Learn more at [tpchd.org/yardcare](https://tpchd.org/yardcare).

## Live on or near a lake in Pierce County?

### Help us track algae blooms.

Toxic algae move freely in lakes making it difficult for us to fully see current conditions.

We need your help to let us know when toxic algae appears or goes away.

### Join our toxic algae watch volunteer group!

Contact Lindsay at [llarson@tpchd.org](mailto:llarson@tpchd.org) to sign up.



## Water advisories



Find current surface water advisories at [tpchd.org/advisories](https://tpchd.org/advisories).

### Sign up for alerts by email.

1. Visit [tpchd.org/notify](https://tpchd.org/notify).
2. Fill in your info.
3. Check the **Surface Water & Shellfish Advisories** box.
4. Select **Next**.



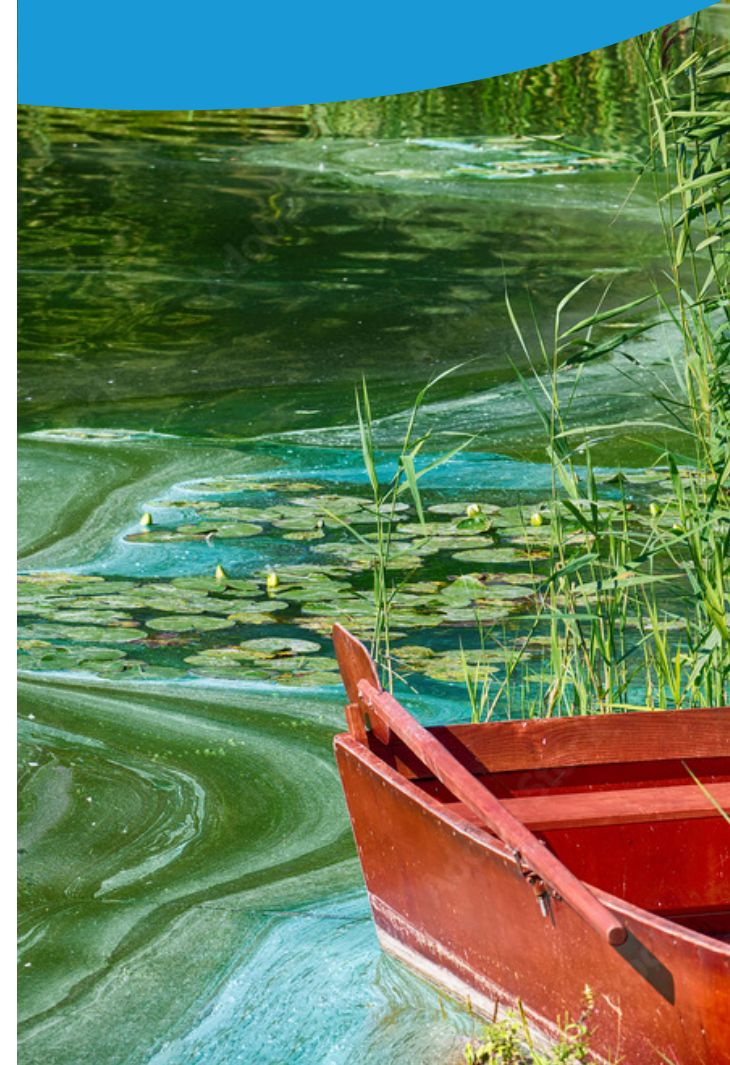
## Questions?

Contact our Surface Water team at [algae@tpchd.org](mailto:algae@tpchd.org) or (253) 649-1420.

Rev. April 2026

# Toxic Algae

*What you should know*



# Keep your family and pets safe.

*When in doubt, stay out!*

## What is toxic algae?

Toxic algae, or cyanobacteria, are blue-green algae, naturally present in fresh water. In the right conditions, these algae can multiply quickly and form large blooms dangerous for people and pets.

Many blooms float to the surface and form very obvious scum, but wind and weather can quickly change the amount and location of algae.

### It can make you and your pets sick.

Touching or drinking water with toxic algae can make people very sick. Kids and pets are at even greater risk because they have smaller bodies and are more likely to swallow water.



Talk to a doctor if you have vomiting, dizziness, diarrhea, skin or eye rash, or difficulty breathing after contact with surface water.

Call us at (253) 649-1420 to report toxic algae after you talk to a doctor.



## What does toxic algae look like?

Toxic algae blooms vary in appearance from green, turquoise, red, yellow, brown, or white. Blooms can look like scum, streaks, or clumps in the water.

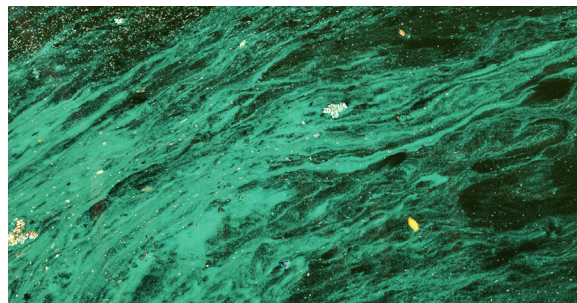
### Scums

Like pea soup or paint.



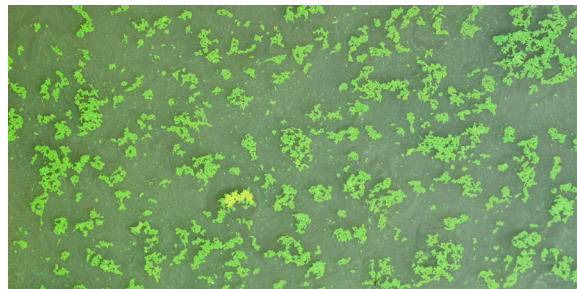
### Streaks

Colored bands on the water surface.



### Specks or clumps

Free-floating or attached to the bottom.



## What should I do if I see an algae bloom?



- Don't drink lake water.
- Don't play in water with visible algae.
- Keep your family and animals away.

## Can I eat fish from water with toxic algae?

Avoid eating fish from areas with visible algae. Always clean fish well and discard the guts.

