

## **Keeping your dog safe from HABs:**

Where are harmful algal blooms (HABs)?

Harmful algal blooms (HABs) are commonly found in fresh and marine waters. The most common freshwater HABs are cyanobacterial blooms (cyanoHABs), also known as blue-green algae. You can't tell if a bloom is toxic by looking at it, but signs include: surface discoloration like green, brown, red or blue tint, thick, mat-like accumulations or scum on the shoreline and surface.

### **HABS Effects on Dogs**

Dogs may be exposed to toxins by drinking the water, eating washed up mats or scum of toxic cyanobacteria, digesting toxic fish or shellfish, and by having skin contact with water. Dogs are often attracted to algal scum odors. After leaving the water, dogs can also be affected by grooming their fur and paws.

### **Signs of poisoning**

Signs of poisoning can occur within minutes to a few hours after exposure. Common signs of poisoning include: repeated vomiting • diarrhea or bloody stool • abdominal swelling that is tender to the touch • bluish coloration of skin • stumbling, seizures, convulsions, paralysis • excessive salivation/drooling • disorientation • skin rashes

### **What to do**

When possible, don't let your dog wade, drink the water or eat/walk in a lake or beach with a HAB. If you suspect your dog has been exposed, please remove them immediately, don't let them lick their fur or paws, and rinse/wash them thoroughly with fresh water. Please closely monitor for any signs and immediately seek medical assistance if you observe any of the above signs of poisoning.

### **Know where to go**

Check your local lakes & beaches: While NOAA and the EPA share jurisdiction over HABs, generally, freshwater blooms like cyanoHABs fall under EPA's purview and NOAA has responsibility over marine HABs. The two agencies share responsibility for the Great Lakes. State, tribal, and local governments monitor for HABs and their toxins at coastal waters, lakes and reservoirs and streams. Check your state and local public health agency websites for information about lakes and beaches in your area.

### **For more information**

NOAA offers forecasts and emailed bulletins about HAB conditions in the nation's ocean and coastal resources, and the Great Lakes. To learn more, please visit: <https://go.usa.gov/xV4JC>

To learn more about freshwater HABs and their toxins, visit the EPA at:

<https://www.epa.gov/cyanohabs>. You can also watch a video on how to protect your dog from HABs here: <https://bit.ly/2Znqhv2>