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NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

To: Local Media
From: Rick Wietersen, Environmental Health Director
Date: July 25, 2023

Blue-Green Algae Observed in Rock County

Rock County, WI –Rock County Public Health Department (RCPHD) officials report that conditions are right for Cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae, to show up in local waters. They have recently observed blue-green algae in the Rock River and Lake Koshkonong. Because it is hard to determine exact levels of blue-green algae toxin concentrations, anyone considering recreation on or in the water should use caution and common sense.

The Public Health Department recommends taking the following precautions:

- **Avoid swimming in areas of high algae concentration.** Stay away from water with a floating scum layer that looks like green, blue, or white paint or pea-soup.
- **Do not swallow pond, lake, or river water.** This is especially important for small children and pets.
- **Rinse off after coming in contact with pond, lake, or river water.** If you think you have become ill from exposure to blue-green algae, contact your healthcare provider immediately.

Blue-green algae are naturally present in Wisconsin ponds, rivers, and lakes. When conditions are favorable, the algae can grow rapidly and form blooms of bright green, blue-green, or white. They can form thick scum layers on the surface of the water and may look bubbly or frothy. The blooms may have a foul odor, particularly in warm summer months. Some of the algae can produce a toxin that may lead to harmful health effects if ingested.

Some symptoms of exposure can be:

- skin or eye irritation,
- vomiting,
- diarrhea, or
- cold or flu-like symptoms.

Pets and children are particularly vulnerable to these conditions because of their size and because they don't have a natural tendency to avoid these water conditions. Dogs also have an increased risk of illness from the toxins as they are likely to ingest the water.

More information on blue-green algae can be on the [State's website](#) or by calling the Rock County Public Health Department at (608) 757-5440.



Blue-Green Algae in Rock River at Preservation Park, Town of Beloit, July 2023

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Rock County Public Health Department serves Rock County residents by improving population health outcomes and removing barriers through community partnerships to provide everyone the opportunity to reach their full health potential. Visit the Rock County Public Health Department [website](#) and follow them on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#). Please send all media inquiries to:

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