



## Barry-Eaton District Health Department

Be Active • Be Safe • Be Healthy

Barry County: 330 W. Woodlawn Ave., Hastings MI 49058  
Phone: 269-945-9516 Fax: 269-818-0237

Eaton County: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI 48813  
Phone: 517-543-2430 Fax: 517-543-7737

Eaton Behavioral Health: 1033 Health Care Dr., Charlotte, MI  
48813  
Phone: 517-543-2580 Fax: 517-543-8191

### **BEDHD Issues Public Health Advisory for Historic Charlton Park Beach**

The Barry-Eaton District Health Department (BEDHD), with guidance from the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services (MDHHS), today has issued a public health advisory for the Thornapple Lake swimming beach at Historic Charlton Park due to possible presence of a harmful algal bloom (HAB). HABs can cause skin and eye irritation, gastrointestinal upset, and respiratory illness in humans; they can cause more severe harm to pets.

On July 11, 2017, the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality (MDEQ) got a referral about suspicious-looking algae scum at Historic Charlton Park's beach. MDEQ collected water samples to test for a harmful toxin that often causes HABs. The early sample results show that this toxin is probably present at the swimming beach. However, the levels of the toxin are unknown and may not be high enough to be a threat to humans or pets. More tests are underway to find out how much toxin is present. BEDHD expects to get these results in the next week or so.

Based on current information, BEDHD recommends that people and pets not enter the water, especially where blue-green algae is visible. For those who do enter the water, BEDHD strongly suggests the following:

- Avoid water that looks like spilled paint, has surface scums or films, is discolored or has colored streaks, and/or has green globs floating below the surface.
- Avoid swallowing water.
- Rinse off with clean water as soon as possible after swimming.
- Keep pets out of the water. If they enter the water, rinse them off immediately after; do not let them drink the water or lick algae off their coats.
- Know that water spray contact on skin or breathing/inhaling water droplets, which may happen when boating or jet skiing, may cause health problems.

These cautionary recommendations are based on water samples taken July 11 and analyzed on July 12. **These results are preliminary and BEDHD's recommendations may change as more information becomes available.** The public should also know that the amount of algae present in the lake could change quickly, which may also affect BEDHD's recommendations.

Freshwater HABs are often caused by cyanobacteria, also known as blue-green algae. HABs are a result of high nutrient levels (nutrient pollution, including nitrogen and phosphorus), warm temperatures, and low winds. Not all algal blooms produce toxins, but to be safe, people and animals should avoid contact with very thick green scums in surface waters.

If you have questions, or concerns about algae in a lake, river, or beach, contact BEDHD at (517) 541-2670. For more information about HABs, see MDEQ's information at <https://goo.gl/Ar6HSG>. For information about how HABs can affect health, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/habs/>. If you believe you have come into contact with an HAB and have symptoms of illness, contact your health care provider.