

# What You Should Know about Blue Green Algae (BGA)

## What are Blue Green Algae?

- Blue Green Algae (BGA) are microscopic organisms present in water bodies.
- BGA can reproduce rapidly in water bodies with adequate amounts of sunlight and nutrients such as phosphorous and nitrogen.

## Why should I be concerned about BGA?

The toxins produced by BGA may cause a variety of reactions, most commonly, upper respiratory problems, eye irritation, vomiting, and diarrhea.

Any contact with BGA can be harmful.

The Oklahoma Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) recommends that you avoid any body contact where BGA is present. This includes swimming, water skiing, etc.

If you, or anyone you know, has had contact with water where BGA was present, contact your physician.

Children are particularly vulnerable to BGA as they tend to weigh less than adults and smaller quantities of the toxins may trigger a more severe effect.

## How can I tell if BGA are present?

- BGA may look like thick pea soup, green paint, bluish, brownish or reddish-green paint
- When BGA washes up on shore, it can form a thick mat on the beach.
- BGA are made up of extremely small organisms that are difficult to pick up and hold.
- Some types of BGA can occur as a bloom 1-3 feet below the surface and can only be identified using a microscope. It is always important to be aware of any posted warning signs and follow those recommendations.

## Can my livestock and pets be harmed by BGA?

Yes. Livestock and pets are particularly susceptible to the harmful effects of BGA. If pets or livestock inhale or consume BGA, it can lead to severe illness and even death.

**Do Not** allow livestock or pets to swim in or drink water where

BGA is present.

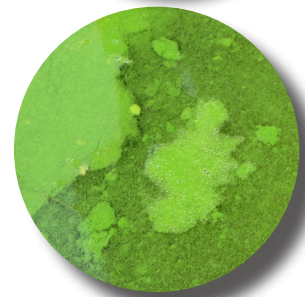
If your pet has been exposed to BGA, contact your veterinarian or an emergency animal clinic.

## What should I do if I see a BGA bloom?

- It's not always possible to see BGA, so remember to look for posted signs and always be mindful of water conditions.
- Avoid all contact with the water.
- Keep your pets and livestock away from the water.
- Immediately contact DEQ at:

**1-800-522-0206**

## Blue Green Algae Blooms in Oklahoma:



## For More Information:

Call: 1 - (800) - 522 - 0206  
or visit our website at:  
[www.deq.state.ok.us](http://www.deq.state.ok.us)