



Kent City Health Department

414 E. Main St. Kent OH 44240
330-678-8109

FACT SHEET

SEPTEMBER 2019

www.kentpublichealth.org

BY THE NUMBERS

65%

EPA estimates that algal blooms impact 65 percent of the country's major estuaries, with an annual cost of \$2.2 billion.



50

Harmful algal blooms are an environmental problem across all 50 states.

1%

Less than 1% of algal blooms actually produce toxins.

Harmful Algal Blooms

■ ■ 3% of Portage County adults thought unsafe water supply threatened their health. Source: **Portage County Community Health Assessment**

Algal blooms occur when algae multiply very quickly in warm still waters. A harmful algal bloom (HAB) is a rapidly growing population of algae-like cyanobacteria that causes visible bursts of color in bodies of freshwater, marine (salt) water, and brackish water around the world. A harmful bloom is when the organisms release toxins called cyanotoxins into the water. There are many types of these toxins that are poisoning humans, pets and livestock.

Want to learn more? Source: <https://odh.ohio.gov/harmful-algal>



Ohio Department of Health
Bryce Kerr
(614) 728-4160

PROBLEM

Toxins can cause illness in humans, pets and livestock:

- ■ Harmful algal blooms (HABs) release a wide variety of toxins that may cause different symptoms that could be contracted in different ways. Drinking, touching or accidentally breathing in water contaminated with HABs can all lead to illnesses. Symptoms of HAB-related illness include: diarrhea, vomiting, irritated skin, dizziness, light-headedness and allergic reactions.
- ■ Pets and livestock can become sick by drinking water or by licking fur after swimming in a harmful water supply.
- ■ HABs can be undistinguishable from blooms of other algae types. *Within a body of water, HABs may appear as a filmy, crusty or puffy mass commonly green to white to black in color looking like spilled paint, pea soup, foam, wool, or green cottage cheese curls in patterns of clippings, dots or streaks.*

WHAT CAN BE DONE?

Everyone can:

- ■ Keep an eye out for all algal blooms. Avoid exposure & drinking of harmful surface water; or fishing from it: www.ohio.gov/hab, www.poison.org/algal-bloom
- ■ Protect children and pets from playing around HABs: www.cdc.gov/habs, www.epa.ohio.gov/hab-algae
- ■ Pay attention to posted advisories and learn more about safeguards: www.noaa.gov/hazards/hab, www.odh/harmful-algal-blooms

Conspiring Climate Changes and Algal Blooms

