

Communications Office
Peterborough County-City Health Unit
10 Hospital Drive
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391
www.pcchu.ca



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Wednesday, June 15, 2011, Peterborough

Health Unit Advises Pigeon Lake Area Residents of Suspected Blue Green Algae Bloom

Residents Advised to Use Alternate Water Source

People who draw water from the “Back Channel” section of Pigeon Lake, in the north-east area of the lake, are being advised to find an alternate source of water after a large quantity of algae resembling blue-green algae was discovered in the lake.

The Peterborough County-City Health Unit is issuing the advisory as a precaution after receiving a report from the Ontario Ministry of the Environment (MOE) that an algae bloom is being investigated to determine if it blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria as it is known by its scientific name. Testing is being done on the algae, and results are expected early Friday, June 17.

As an immediate precaution, the Health Unit is advising residents in the affected area to avoid using water from the lake and seek alternative sources of water for all purposes, including drinking, cooking, bathing, washing clothes and dishes, and providing water to pets. Dogs and other pets should also be kept from entering and swimming in the water. The advisory **does not** affect people who use municipal water systems, or those residents who draw water from drilled wells that are not affected by lake water.

The Health Unit’s advisory is in effect until further notice.

Blue-green algae are naturally-occurring phenomena that can produce toxins when it is dying or disturbed. This can put the health of people and animals at risk. Drinking water with the toxins may result in headaches, fever, diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea and vomiting. Bathing or showering in water with blue-green algae can result in skin rashes, swollen lips, eye irritation and redness, ear ache and itchiness, sore throat, hay fever-like symptoms and asthma. Anyone who experiences these symptoms should seek immediate medical attention.

Residents who draw their household water from the Back Channel area of Pigeon Lake

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are advised that boiling the water will not solve this problem. Boiling will kill the algae, but in doing so, will release toxins into the water.

Residents in Galway-Cavendish and Harvey Township requiring further information should contact the Peterborough County-City Health Unit by calling (705) 743-1000.

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For further information, please contact:

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