

## Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit  
10 Hospital Drive  
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1  
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391  
[www.pcchu.ca](http://www.pcchu.ca)



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Friday, June 24, 2011, Peterborough

# Blue-Green Algae Found in Big Bald and Pigeon Lakes

## *Residents Advised to Use Alternate Water Source*

Area residents are encouraged to be on the lookout for blue-green algae in local waterways, especially if they draw drinking water directly from a lake. With the current warm weather in the area, the Peterborough County-City Health Unit warns conditions are ideal for the formation of blue-green algae. This is especially true in lakes and reservoirs with shallow, slow moving or still water that is rich in nutrients.

Testing performed by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment has identified blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, in Big Bald Lake and the 'Back Channel and Big Bob Channel' areas of Pigeon Lake. The previous advisory for the "Back Channel" area of Pigeon Lake (east side of Boyd Island) remains in effect.

The Peterborough County-City Health Unit would like to remind residents in the affected areas 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 advisory is in effect until further notice.

Blue-green algae are naturally-occurring phenomena in fresh water that can produce toxins when it is dying or disturbed. Blue-green algae, which are naturally-occurring, often give the water a pea soup appearance, and can appear blue-green, bright blue, grey or tan in colour. 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 identified areas 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.

The Ministry of Environment will continue to monitor the situation and the Peterborough County-City Health Unit will provide updates as new information becomes available.

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

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More health-related information about blue-green algae can be found online at the following links:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/pubs/water-eau/cyanobacter-eng.php>

[http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@ene/@resources/documents/resource/std01\\_079456.pdf](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/stdprodconsume/groups/lr/@ene/@resources/documents/resource/std01_079456.pdf)

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**For media inquiries please contact:**

Brittany Cadence  
Communications Supervisor  
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391

**For residents seeking further information:**

Chris Eaton  
Public Health Inspector  
(705) 743-1000, ext. 225