

For Immediate Release | July 28, 2023

Toxins in algae blooms at N’Kwala (Nicola), Spaxomin (Douglas) and Chapperon lakes

MERRITT – Interior Health is advising people who use N’Kwala (Nicola) Lake, Spaxomin (Douglas) Lake and/or Chapperon Lake that there is a risk of exposure to cyanobacterial toxin due to the presence of blue-green algae blooms on these lakes.

Water samples taken on July 26 from each lake tested positive for the cyanobacterial toxin. Cyanobacteria can produce several types of toxin that can be poisonous to people, pets and livestock.

Exposure to cyanobacteria toxin can occur through ingestion of or contact with contaminated water. A list of current beach closures can be found on the IH public website [here](#).

Lake users are advised to not use the water in these lakes at this time:

- If you obtain drinking water from the lake, you should use an alternate source, such as bottled water. **Boiling the water will not remove the toxin.**
- Do not swim in the water and avoid contact with the water by avoiding recreational activities such as, boating and waterskiing. If your skin is exposed to contaminated water, rinse off with clean water immediately.
- Use an alternate source of drinking water for pets and livestock.
- Exposure to the toxins can result in symptoms that are visible shortly after exposure including dizziness, cramps, diarrhea, skin rash and mouth blisters (from ingestion).
- If you show symptoms that may be linked to cyanobacteria exposure, contact your physician. For more information please see [Cyanobacteria Blooms \(Blue-green Algae\) | HealthLink BC](#)

Algae blooms can remain in a water body for weeks to months. Once the bloom is no longer present and two consecutive sets of samples do not show the presence of cyanobacteria toxin, Interior Health will review any beach closures and/or advisories.

To report other algae blooms please visit the provincial [Algae Watch](#) page.