

# Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

For the last several years Discovery Bay has experienced harmful algal blooms (HABs), especially during the warm months. These are typically the result of warm, slow-moving, nutrient-rich water. The algae causing these blooms can produce toxins, which at high enough concentrations pose a health risk to humans or animals that consume or come into contact with the water.

The County's Environmental Health Division collects samples the water for testing, and if the toxin levels are found to exceed safe thresholds, they provide warning signs to the Harbor Master to post. You may have seen these signs. The type of sign posted is based on the concentration of the toxin in the water. At the lowest of toxin levels, a Caution sign is posted. At a higher concentration, a Warning sign is posted. And at high enough levels, Danger sign is posted. As you can see on the signs, the Danger level indicates more water activities that health officials recommend be avoided. Similarly, the Warning sign indicates more restrictions for water-related activities than the Caution level.

## CAUTION

**Harmful algae may be present in these waters.  
For your family's safety:**

 **DO NOT SWIM OR WADE** near algae or scum.

 **DO NOT** let pets or livestock go into or drink the water, or eat scum on the shoreline.

 **KEEP CHILDREN AWAY** from algae in the water or on the shore.

 For fish caught here. **THROW AWAY GUTS AND CLEAN FILLETS** with tap water or bottled water before cooking.

 **DO NOT** drink this water or use it for cooking.

 **DO NOT** eat shellfish from these waters.

Call your doctor or veterinarian if you or your pet get sick after going in the water.  
Visit [cchealth.org](http://cchealth.org) for more information



## WARNING

**Toxins from algae in these waters can harm people and kill pets and livestock**

 **NO SWIMMING**

 **DO NOT** let pets or livestock go into or drink the water, or go near the scum.

 **STAY AWAY** from scum, and cloudy or discolored water.

 **DO NOT** eat shellfish from these waters.

 **DO NOT** use these waters for drinking or cooking. Boiling or filtering will not make the water safe.

 For fish caught here. **THROW AWAY GUTS AND CLEAN FILLETS** with tap water or bottled water before cooking.

**For people, the toxins can cause:**

- Skin rashes, eye irritation
- Diarrhea, vomiting

**For animals, the toxins can cause:**

- Diarrhea, vomiting
- Convulsions and death

Call your doctor or veterinarian if you or your pet get sick after going in the water.  
For more information, visit [cchealth.org](http://cchealth.org)




## DANGER

**Toxins from algae in these waters can harm people and kill pets and livestock**

   **STAY OUT OF THE WATER UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE. Do not touch scum in the water or on shore.**

   **DO NOT** let pets or livestock drink or go into the water or go near the scum.

  **DO NOT** eat fish or shellfish from these waters.

 **DO NOT** use these waters for drinking or cooking. Boiling or filtering will not make the water safe.

**For people, the toxins can cause:**

- Skin rashes, eye irritation
- Diarrhea, vomiting

**For animals, the toxins can cause:**

- Diarrhea, vomiting
- Convulsions and death

Call your doctor or veterinarian if you or your pet get sick after going in the water.  
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In 2017, Environmental Health's sampling found the harmful algal blooms beginning late June and extending into November. This was a longer time period than the year before. Environmental Health will come out when the weather gets warm to do a round of sampling. If toxins are found, the appropriate warning signs will be provided to the Harbor Master. In the fall, follow-up samples will be collected. If these show the absence of toxins, the signs will be removed.

Environmental Health has information about HABs on their website: [cchealth.org/eh/hab](http://cchealth.org/eh/hab)  
The California Water Monitoring Council has additional information on its website: [mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/index.html](http://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/index.html)