A harmful algal bloom (HAB) is an overgrowth of algae in a water body that can affect water quality and aquatic life. Some HABs produced by bacteria can create toxins that may also harm people, animals, and the local environment.

**Harmful Algal Blooms**

**Look Out For**

**Toxic Algae Present**

DON’T Play with scum or mats on the shore

DON’T Let animals drink water, eat algae, or swim

DON’T Swim

DON’T Boat or kayak

DON’T Fish or wade

**A harmful algal bloom (HAB) is an overgrowth of algae in a water body that can affect water quality and aquatic life. Some HABs produced by bacteria can create toxins that may also harm people, animals, and the local environment.**

**How to Identify a Harmful Algal Bloom**

Algal blooms can make the water appear green, brown, gold, or red. They often produce scum, mats, foams, or paint-like streaks in the water or clumps on the shore. However, only professional water testing can confirm if HABs and toxins are present. State and local governments often test water for bacteria or toxins to protect water quality as part of their water quality standards program.

**When in Doubt, Stay Out!**

**Stay Away from the Water When You Suspect a Harmful Algal Bloom Is Present.**

**Who Can Get Sick from a HAB?**

**Routes & Symptoms of Exposure to HABs**

**Symptoms Can Vary Depending on How the Person or Animal Was Exposed and Whether the HAB Is in Salt or Fresh Water.**

**Routes of Exposure**

- **Skin Contact**
- **Ingestion**
- **Inhalation**

**Symptoms of Exposure**

- **Inhalation**
  - Drooling, diarrhea, low energy, not eating, stumbling, tremors, and vomiting

- **Ingestion**
  - Abdominal pain, diarrhea, liver and kidney damage, and vomiting

- **Skin Contact**
  - Rash, burn, eye, nose, skin, and throat irritation, and edema

**What to Do if Exposed to a HAB**

- Shower immediately

- Call a doctor or QUEST center for advice

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO REPORT POSSIBLE HARMFUL ALGAL BLOOMS: (844) 729-6466 | https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/