



DOUGLAS COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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Carter Lake Health Alert Continues Due to Toxic Algae

The Douglas County Health Department reports that Carter Lake continues to test high at 29.26 parts per billion of total microcystins, which are toxins released by strains of blue-green algae. Samples were taken May 22 and May 23, 2006 from many of the public lakes in Nebraska. The threshold to classify this lake as a Health Alert status is 20 parts per billion established by State Health and Human Services, Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality and other state water quality experts.

Carter Lake has both an Omaha and Iowa side due to the historical formation of the Oxbow Lake. On the Omaha side of the lake, the City of Omaha Parks and Recreation has posted signs to advise the public to use caution. Recreational boating and fishing are permitted at the lake as long as the public makes sure to avoid situations that could involve ingestion of water. This includes keeping pets from drinking or contact exposure to this water. Swimming is not permitted on the Omaha side of Carter Lake. People can still use the public areas for camping, picnics and other outdoor activities.

Carter Lake had health alerts issued for several weeks in 2004 and 2005. Approximately 33 public lakes in Nebraska will be monitored weekly or biweekly throughout the 2006 recreational season through September, 2006. Sampling results will be updated every Friday and posted on the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality's web site, www.deq.state.ne.us.

(For more information about potential health effects of toxic blue-green algae, what to look for, and steps to avoid exposure, please refer to the attached Fact Sheet.)

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