

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Potentially Toxic Algae May Be Present in Nebraska Lakes

Lincoln—Officials from the Nebraska Health and Human Services System have anecdotal evidence that there may be potentially toxic algae blooms in lakes in the southeast corner of *Saunders County* along the Platte River.

Toxic algae has a thickness similar to motor oil and often looks like thick paint in the water. Avoid:

- Water that has a neon green, blue-green or reddish-brown color;
- Water that has a bad odor;
- Foam, scum or a thick paint-like appearance on the water surface;
- Green or blue-green streaks on the surface
- Accumulations of algae in bays and along shorelines.

Do not swim and do not allow children and pets to enter the water if there are algae blooms nearby that have the above characteristics.

The risk to humans come from external exposure (prolonged contact with skin) and from swallowing the water. Symptoms from external exposure are skin rashes, lesions and blisters. More severe cases can include mouth ulcers, ulcers inside the nose, eye and/or ear irritation and blistering of the lips. Symptoms from ingestion can include headaches, nausea, muscular pains, central abdominal pain, diarrhea and vomiting. Severe cases could include seizures, liver failure and respiratory arrest.

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality is conducting testing at selected public lakes. For more information, call the Surface Water Unit at (402) 471-0096 or (402) 471-2186.

The University of Nebraska Water Quality Extension Program has lake test kits that can be sent to interested lake associations, owners and individuals so they can collect a sample from a private lake and send it to UN-L for analysis. For more information, call the program at (402) 472-7783 or (402) 472-8190. *Cont'd...*

Anyone experiencing symptoms as a result of lake-related activity should contact a physician.

For additional information contact your local health department or go to www.hhss.ne.gov or www.deq.state.ne.us