



# Lake Champlain Committee

LCC is a bi-state nonprofit organization working for a healthy, accessible lake through science-based advocacy, education, and collaborative action since 1963.

## Our Cyanobacteria Monitoring Program

- Raises awareness of the issue, builds a database of information on bloom frequency, and identifies and publicizes potential health hazards.
- Trains hundreds of community scientists.
- Coordinates with NY and VT health, environmental, and recreation agencies.
- Monitors over 100 sites in NY and VT; the information gathered helps us better understand the triggers for blooms and aid in the work to reduce their frequency.

### Join Us

Help us work for clean water by becoming an LCC member or making a donation on our website, over the phone, or by mailing a check to the address below. Your support helps us protect the vitality of Lake Champlain!



### Contact

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Email | [lcc@lakechamplaincommittee.org](mailto:lcc@lakechamplaincommittee.org)  
Website | [www.lakechamplaincommittee.org](http://www.lakechamplaincommittee.org)  
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Burlington, VT 05401



The Lake Champlain Committee's cyanobacteria work and this flier were partially funded through a grant from the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

# Avoid it.

Cyanobacteria can produce liver toxins and neurotoxins.

**Children and pets are more vulnerable to blooms** because of their small body size, likeliness to drink water when in it, and attraction to smelly or colored water.

## DO NOT

- Swim, boat, fish, or wade in areas with blooms, suspicious-looking water, or posted with cyanobacteria warning signs.
- Drink, prepare food, cook, make ice, or brush your teeth with untreated lake water.
- Allow dogs in water with cyanobacteria or let them lick their fur, hair, or paws if they've come in contact with a bloom.

If you suspect a bloom near your water intake, don't use the water. Chlorine, ultraviolet (UV) light, and other in-home treatment systems won't remove cyanobacteria toxins and boiling water can make conditions worse by dispersing toxins in the air.

**If you come in direct contact with cyanobacteria, immediately rinse off with clean water. If you experience symptoms, contact your health care provider or vet.**

## REPORT IT. Who do I tell if I see a bloom?

### Report Blooms To:

Lake Champlain Committee – [LCC@LakeChamplainCommittee.org](mailto:LCC@LakeChamplainCommittee.org)

NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) – [HABsInfo@dec.ny.gov](mailto:HABsInfo@dec.ny.gov)

### Report Bloom-Related Symptoms To:

NYS Department of Health – [HarmfulAlgae@health.ny.gov](mailto:HarmfulAlgae@health.ny.gov)

Your Local Health Department – [health.ny.gov/EnvironmentalContacts](http://health.ny.gov/EnvironmentalContacts)



# CYANOBACTERIA



**Recognize it.  
Avoid it.  
Report it.**





Photo by Rachel Cray

**C**yanobacteria blooms pose a health concern because of their potential to produce toxins. Not all blooms are cyanobacteria and not all cyanobacteria blooms are toxic.

This flyer is a visual guide to help people distinguish cyanobacteria from various types of floating phenomena that are often mistaken for it. The key should not be relied upon to determine whether or not a cyanobacteria bloom contains toxins, that can only be determined through lab analysis of a water sample.

Since 2003, the Lake Champlain Committee (LCC) has trained citizen volunteers to monitor for cyanobacteria at lakeshore locations. Monitors file weekly online reports that are relayed to local and state agencies and published on the VT Dept. of Health website and accessible to anyone with internet access. The program helps health, environmental and recreational officials assess the safety of our beaches. It also provides important data to help reduce the frequency of blooms.

# Recognize it.

## What are cyanobacteria blooms?

- A **bloom** is a concentration of cyanobacteria that discolors the water.
- Cyanobacteria can multiply quickly, forming blooms that spread across or below the water's surface.
- Not all cyanobacteria blooms give off cyanotoxins.
- You cannot tell if a bloom is producing cyanotoxins by looking at it. The only way to confirm the presence of cyanotoxins is through a lab analysis of a water sample.
- When in doubt, stay out.



Photo by W. Mills

## Bloom-Causing Factors

- P** **N** **Nutrients** | High levels of phosphorus or nitrogen
- Temperature** | Warm water temperatures, above 60° F, during the summer and fall
- Weather** | Calm, still, or hot conditions or after storm events that wash nutrients into the water



## What do blooms look like?

Detecting cyanobacteria is like learning a new instrument or sport: **it takes practice.**



Photo by Jeff Van Den Noort

When cyanobacteria starts to be visible in water, they often appear as tiny specks or fuzzy balls.

**Looks Like:** floating dots, streaks, clumps, globs, mats, scum, spilled paint, pea soup, or an oily sheen



Photo by Ian Bentley



Photo by Ann Wyatt

**Color:** various shades of green, blue, or blue-green, but can be red, purple, brown, or white

## Look-Alikes!



Photo by Jeff Van Den Noort

Duckweed

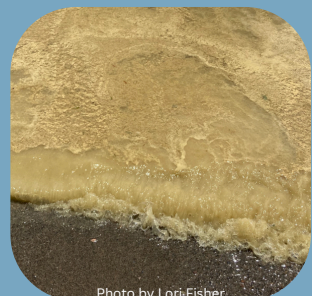


Photo by Lori Fisher

Pollen

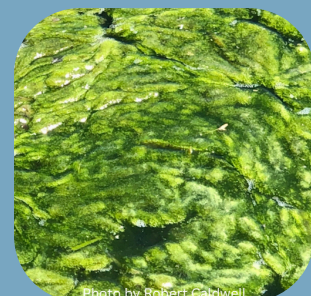


Photo by Robert Caldwell

Green Algae