



**Kathleen Cuddy, MPH
Public Health Director
Cayuga County Health Department
8 Dill St.
Auburn, NY 13021**



For Immediate Release: Friday, September 8, 2023

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs)

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) have been reported on Cayuga, Owasco and Skaneateles Lakes this summer. HABs tend to be more wide-spread on Cayuga County lakes in the latter half of the summer months (late August – October). Over the past week or so, reports of HABs have been more wide-spread on Owasco Lake. To view where HABs have been reported visit the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) website: <https://on.ny.gov/nyhabs>

Owasco Lake is the source of public drinking water for the City of Auburn and the Town of Owasco as well as other municipalities in the county that purchase water from the city and town. Public water supplies that draw water from surface water are disinfected and monitored. The City of Auburn and Town of Owasco water treatment plants routinely monitor the water entering the treatment plant from the lake and have begun sampling the public water supplies since the middle of August for toxins associated with harmful algal blooms. Residents would be notified by the Cayuga County Health Department if public water supplies are adversely impacted by HABs.

Many lakefront households draw water directly from the lake for home use. As a reminder, the Health Department discourages this at all times. Lakefront properties were mailed educational materials this year that included this information:

- Never drink water that is drawn from the lake, at any depth, whether or not harmful algal blooms are present. This includes using the water for making infant formula, making ice, brushing teeth and preparing food. Since individual water supplies are not regulated or monitored, it is not known if there is a health risk to drinking the water from your private water supply.
- In-home treatment units such as boiling, disinfecting water with chlorine or ultraviolet radiation (UV), and water filtration units do not remove the toxins associated with harmful algal blooms.



**Kathleen Cuddy, MPH
Public Health Director
Cayuga County Health Department
8 Dill St.
Auburn, NY 13021**



The Cayuga County Health Department is reminding the public to **KNOW IT, AVOID IT, REPORT IT:**

- HABs look like discolored water with a paint-like or filmy appearance or floating scum
- Always stay away from blooms in lakes or streams
- Never swim, fish, boat, wade or eat fish caught in areas with blooms
- Never drink, prepare food, cook, or make ice with a private water supply drawn directly from a lake that is untreated or improperly treated



- If you see a harmful algal bloom, you can report it to the NYSDEC at <https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/83310.html>

More information regarding HABs can be found at www.cayugacounty.us/health or by contacting the Cayuga County Health Department at (315) 253-1560.
