News Release

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For Immediate Release
Contact: 518-565-4840

Harmful Algal Blooms Found at Local Beach

Plattsburgh, July 12, 2021. The Clinton County Health Department (CCHD) is advising residents to be on the look-out for Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) at local swimming areas.

Point au Roche State Park announced on Monday that their swimming area would be closed until further notice due to HABs. “This particular park’s water is regulated by New York State, not CCHD,” stated Ryan Davies, Director/Engineer of CCHD’s Environmental Health and Safety Division. “But HABs can happen at any of our waterfront areas.”

HABs are the rapid growth of cyanobacteria, or algae, that can cause harm to people and animals. They can look like foam, scum, paint, or mats on the surface of the water. These blooms produce toxins that can make people or pets sick. HABs are most likely triggered by a combination of conditions that include: excess nutrients (phosphorus and nitrogen), lots of sunlight, low-water or low-flow conditions, calm water, and/or warm temperatures. Depending on the weather and the characteristics of the lake, HABs may be short-lived (appearing and disappearing in hours) or long-lived (persisting for several weeks or more).

“With recent warm temperatures and low water levels in Lake Champlain, HAB’s were able to grow a little earlier in the season than we are used to seeing,” added Mr. Davies. “The best thing residents can do to protect themselves, their families, and their pets from these blooms is to know what to look for, avoid contact with it, and report any HAB sightings to the DEC (Department of Environmental Conservation).”

- Avoid contact with any floating mats, scums, or discolored water. Colors can include shades of green, blue-green, yellow, brown or red.
- Never drink, prepare food, cook, or make ice with untreated surface water, whether or not algae blooms are present.
- Don’t drink surface water during an algal bloom, even if it is treated, because in-home treatments such as boiling, disinfecting water with chlorine or ultraviolet (UV), and water filtration units do not protect people from HAB toxins.
- If contact does occur, rinse thoroughly with clean water to remove algae. Stop using water and seek medical attention immediately if symptoms such as vomiting, nausea, diarrhea, skin, eye or throat irritation, allergic reactions, or breathing difficulties occur after drinking or having contact with blooms or untreated surface water.
To report a suspected HAB, or learn more about blooms, visit [https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html](https://www.dec.ny.gov/chemical/77118.html). The DEC also maintains a HAB’s ‘Notifications Page’ residents can use to check waterbody’s before heading out on the water.

**About the Clinton County Health Department:**

The Health Department is an accredited full service department serving the residents of Clinton County. The Health Department’s Mission is to improve and protect the health, well-being and environment of the people of Clinton County. Visit our website at [www.clintonhealth.org](http://www.clintonhealth.org) or connect with us on Facebook (@clintonhealth), Twitter (@ClintonCountyHD), and Instagram (clintoncountyhealth).

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