In June 2015, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) released health advisory values for microcystins and cylindrospermopsin toxins in drinking water. These toxins can be produced by cyanobacteria (also known as blue-green algae). However, the only way to know if they are present is to test for them.

According to the EPA, potential health effects from longer-term exposure to higher levels of algal toxins in drinking water include gastroenteritis, and liver and kidney damage. The drinking water health advisory values are based on exposure for 10 days. While briefly exceeding these advisory levels may not indicate an immediate emergency, EPA recommends utilities use treatment techniques to lower levels as quickly as possible.

The Wisconsin State Laboratory of Hygiene (WSLH) has been performing blue-green algae testing for decades.

Call us at 800-442-4618 for testing information.

WSLH Testing Capabilities

The WSLH can test for various toxins using multiple analytical methods.

**Screening Tests**
- Microcystin ELISA
- Cylindrospermopsin ELISA
- Saxitoxin ELISA
- Anatoxin-a by Receptor-Binding Assay

**Confirmation Tests - Liquid Chromatography (HPLC-MS/MS)**
- Microcystins
- Anatoxin-a
- Cylindrospermopsin

**Algae Identification and Quantification**
- Identify and quantify algae, including cyanobacteria

Call us at 800-442-4618 for testing information.

**More Information**

- EPA -- http://water.epa.gov/drink/standards/hascience.cfm
- Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources -- http://dnr.wi.gov/lakes/bluegreenalgae/

**Human and Pet Health Concerns/Emergencies:**
People experiencing symptoms possibly related to blue-green algae exposure (e.g., stomach cramps, diarrhea, vomiting, headache, fever, muscle weakness, difficulty breathing), should contact their healthcare provider or the Wisconsin Poison Center (800-222-1222) right away.

If a pet displays symptoms such as seizures, vomiting, or diarrhea after ingestion of or contact with surface water, contact a veterinarian right away.

To report a suspected case of algae-related illness in Wisconsin:
Fill out the online web form at: https://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/water/bg-algae/index.htm or call the WI Department of Health Services at (608) 266-1120.