



Addressing Harmful Algal Blooms at DHS

WI Coastal Beach Working Group
November 14, 2016

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Wisconsin Department of Health Services



Program Activities

- Identify, evaluate and report cases of human and animal health events related to cyanobacteria in Wisconsin
- Develop outreach capacity to support case reporting and increase awareness of the health issues related to cyanobacteria
- Coordinate water sampling with regional DNR staff and analysis with the State Laboratory of Hygiene



How Does DHS Learn About Illnesses?

- Direct contact with Division of Public Health (DPH) staff via email or phone
- *Report a Case* through DPH website dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/bluegreenalgae
- Wisconsin Poison Center (WPC) automated email case notification
- Department of Natural Resources (DNR), local public health or lake association referral





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Wisconsin's Harmful Algal Blooms Program

Wisconsin's Harmful Algal Blooms program collects information about human and animal illness and death resulting from exposure to blue-green algae. Tracking illness information will help the Wisconsin Division of Public Health measure the problem of blue-green algae in our lakes and rivers.

If you get sick after swimming in a Wisconsin lake or river, please [report possible algae-related illness](#). This program does not provide medical treatment, so if you are experiencing severe symptoms seek medical attention immediately.

When in doubt, best keep out!



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The Official Internet site of the Wisconsin Department of Health Services

Blue-Green Algae -- Home Page - Windows Internet Explorer provided by DHS - State of Wisconsin

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http://www.dhs.wisconsin.gov/eh/bluegreenalgae/

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Algal Bloom Exposure Report

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Algae-Related Illness Report Form

Please use this form to report a human or animal illness or death that you think was related to exposure to blue-green algae. If you have questions about this form, please call Dr. Lynda Knobeloch at 608 266-0923 or email her at lynda.knobeloch@wi.gov. Thank you for reporting this incident to us. We are working hard to improve the health of all Wisconsin residents and visitors.

1. Please enter today's date

 mm/dd/yyyy

2. Please enter your name and address
 Name
 Street Address
 City/township name, State, Zip

3. Are you reporting on a HUMAN or ANIMAL illness?

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Wisconsin's Harmful Algal Blooms program tracks exposure to blue-green algae. Tracking illness information will help the Wisconsin Division of Public Health measure the problem of blue-green algae in our lakes and rivers.

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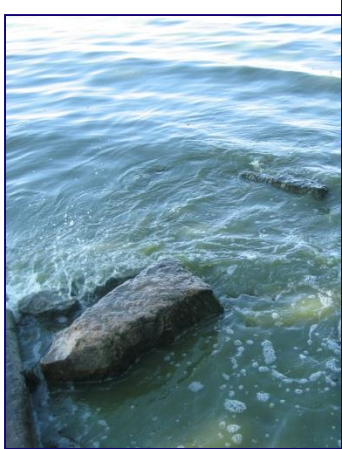
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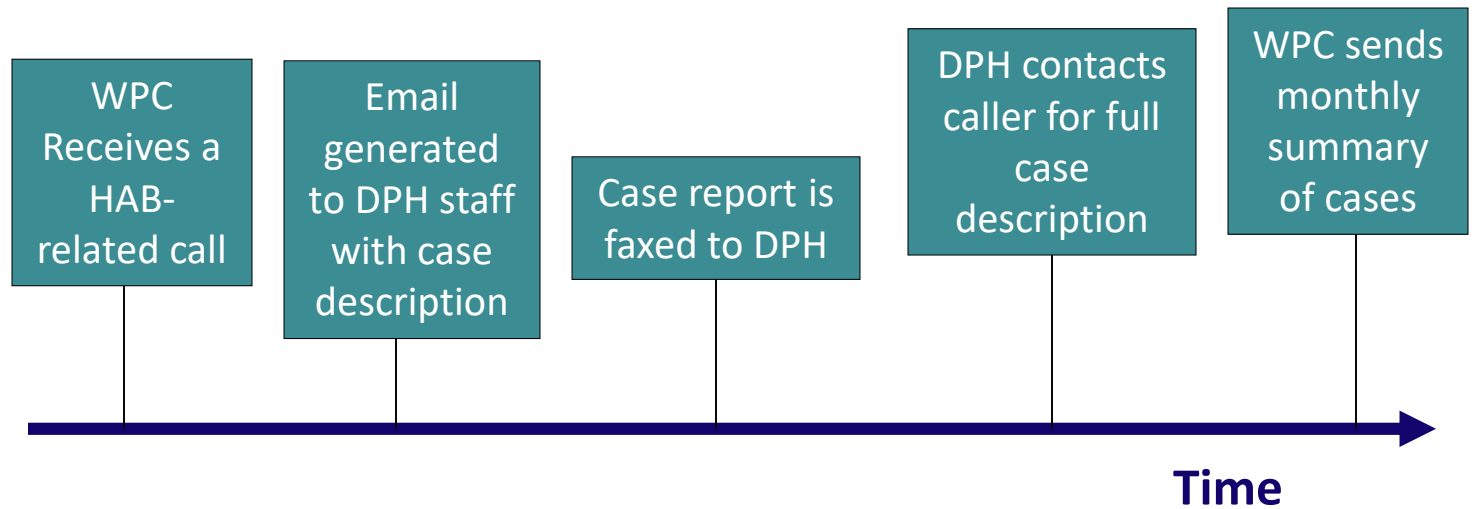
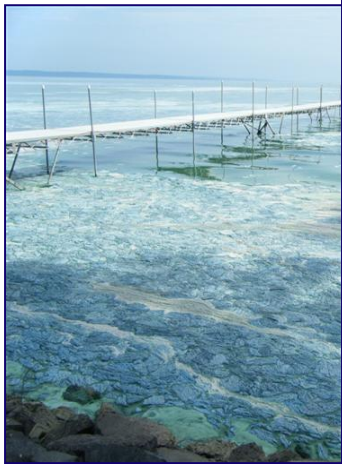
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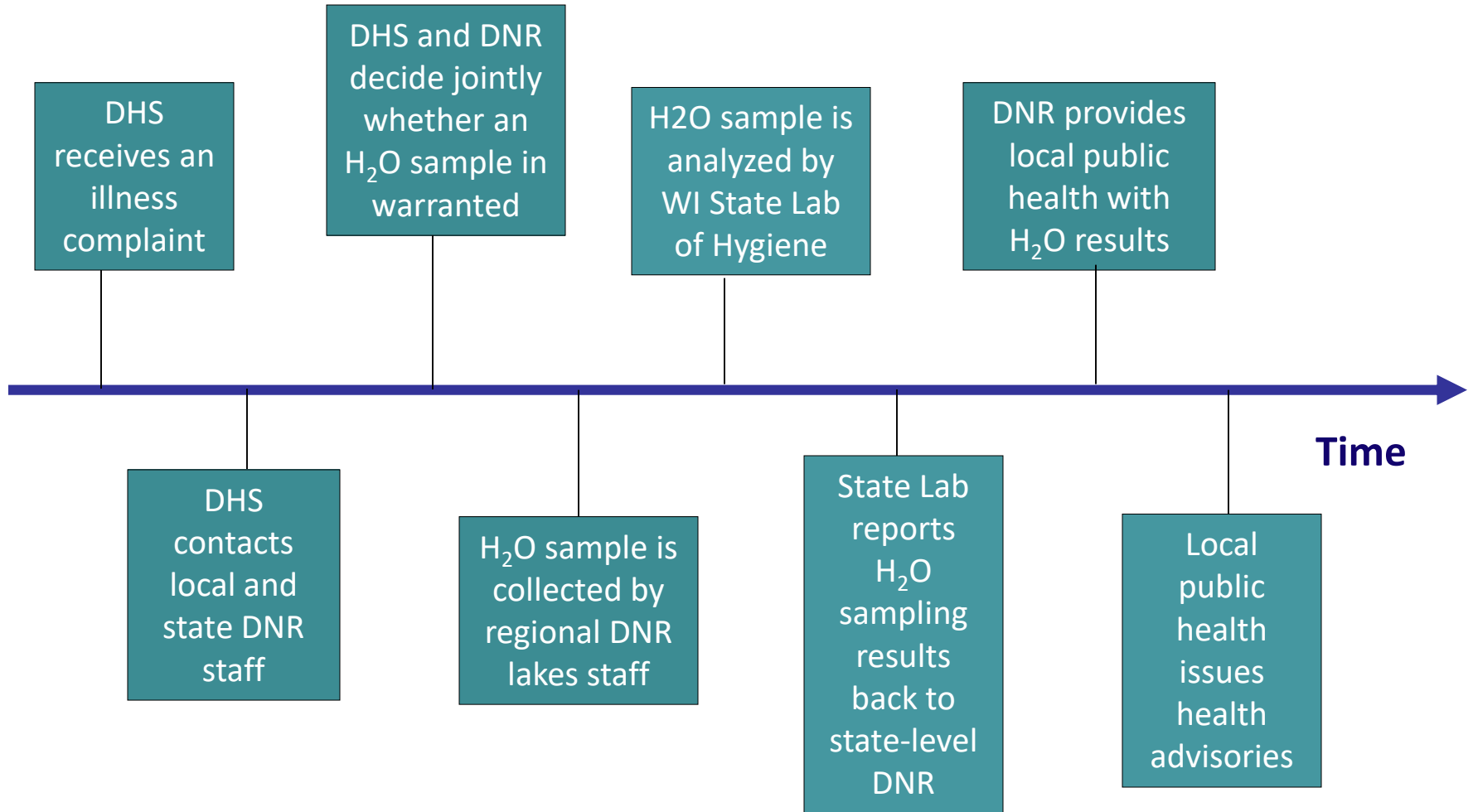
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Partnership with the WI Poison Center (WPC)



Response Timeline



Pre-beach season: H₂O sampling kits are “staged” at regional DNR offices throughout the state



Routes of Exposure and Symptoms

1. Skin Contact:

- Rash, hives and skin blisters (especially in areas under swimsuits)



2. Ingestion:

- Abdominal pain
- Diarrhea
- Vomiting
- Nausea
- Numb lips, tingling fingers and toes, or dizziness



3. Inhalation:

- Flu-like illness
- Respiratory irritation (runny eyes, nose, a sore throat)
- Asthma-like symptoms



Results: Health Complaints



Health Complaints Overview 2009-2016	
Year	# of Health Complaints
2009	37
2010	27
2011	36
2012	33
2013	13
2014	27
2015	10
2016	33



Results: Water Sampling



Year	# of Samples	High Risk Cell Counts > 100,000/ml	Moderate Risk Cell Counts 20,000-100,000/ml	Toxins Detected
2009	13	6	3	9
2010	6*	2	1	2
2011	11**	6	3	7
2012	13**	6	3	6
2013	3	1	0	0

/ Indicates one or more non-standard samples were received from DNR wardens and/or veterinarians.*

- DNR staff use standardized HAB sampling kits to collect water samples, which are then shipped overnight to the State Lab of Hygiene.





Outreach and Program Sustainability

- Health alerts issued in response to water sampling results
- Press releases, YouTube Video, Live Chat with the Experts
- Targeted trainings for local health departments, lake managers, etc.
- Presentations at local, state and national public health events, local lakes associations, DNR lakes meetings





Overarching Guidance

- Don't swim where water is discolored or where you see foam, scum or algal mats
- Shower and wash hands after swimming in lakes, rivers and ponds
- Clean fish thoroughly and discard the viscera and guts
- Keep pets out of soupy, green water or where you see foam, scum, or mats of algae
- Rinse dogs off immediately – do not let them lick algae off their fur
- Respect water-body closures and health advisories





When in Doubt, Stay Out!



CAUTION

WATER QUALITY ADVISORY

This water may contain blue-green algae capable of producing toxins that can be dangerous to humans and pets.



FOR YOUR SAFETY

- If water is cloudy, looks like green paint or pea soup, or has a floating scum layer or floating clumps
 - Do not swim or swallow water
 - Do not allow pets to swim or drink
 - Do not allow children to play in scum layer from shoreline
- Rinse off after swimming

For more information please contact the

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENT at () - -

Questions?

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