Blue-green algae are photosynthetic bacteria known as cyanobacteria and are a natural part of water bodies. With enough sunlight and nutrients, cyanobacteria can grow quickly and form a blue-green algae bloom. Blooms often look like spilled paint or pea soup and can change the color of the water to green, blue, turquoise, brown, purple, or white. Some blooms form a layer of scum or mats on the surface of the water. Blue-green algae can produce toxins which can make people and animals sick after they drink, breathe in, or have contact with the water. Many dogs have become sick and some have even died after drinking water with an algae bloom. Learn how to keep your dog safe!

Why are blue-green algae especially harmful to dogs?
- Dogs can’t tell whether water is safe to swim or play in.
- When dogs swim and play in water, they tend to swallow water.
- Because dogs have smaller bodies, they can get sick after swallowing just a little bit of unsafe water.

How can I keep my dog safe?
- Choose clear water without noticeable discoloration or surface scum, foam, and algal mats.
- Do not let your dog swim in places where beach closure and water quality notices are posted.
- Supervise your dog at all times. Do not let your dog eat algal scum or mats or lick algae off its fur.
- Always offer fresh, clean water for your dog to drink instead of lake, river, or pond water.
- If you have any doubt about what is in the water, keeping your dog out is the safest thing to do.

What should I do if my dog goes in water with blue-green algae?
- Immediately wash your dog and yourself with clean water.
- Keep an eye on your dog for sudden signs of poisoning such as:
  - Vomiting
  - Diarrhea
  - Difficulty breathing
  - Weakness
  - Seizures
  - Extreme tiredness
- If your dog develops any symptoms, take them to a veterinarian immediately.
- Report any blue-green algae related illness to the Wisconsin Division of Public Health by calling 608-266-1120 or completing an online survey at www.dhs.wi.gov and searching “algae.”