

CYANOBACTERIA FACT SHEET

What are Cyanobacteria?

- Formerly blue-green algae
- One of the earliest forms of life
- Important part of food web
- Photosynthetic bacteria
- Fed by sunlight and nutrients
- “Bloom” = excessive growth

Why are we seeing more blooms?

- Nutrient pollution (over time!)
- Extreme weather events
- Warming water temperatures
- Decreased winter ice cover
- Human related activities

Are all blooms toxic?

- All blooms have the potential to produce toxins
- Toxin production is dependent on environment factors
- Quick toxin tests are available, but they're not reliable

Are there treatment options?

- Not for a lake the size of Winni
- Boiling does not remove toxins
- In-home treatment, filtration systems, and purifiers do not remove toxins

Is it safe to swim?

- Not when warnings are posted
- If there is an alert, take extra care to visually assess the water
- Public access points/beaches are not closed during cyano warnings

What if I already went swimming?

- Wash with clean water immediately
- Kids and pets are especially at risk due to ingestion
- Monitor symptoms and seek medical attention if needed

What are exposure symptoms?

- Range from acute to chronic
- Headache/nausea/vomiting
- Gastrointestinal issues
- Eye/nose/mouth irritation
- Tingling/numbness/seizures
- Organ failure

What if I pull from the lake?

- Do not drink water pulled from the lake
- Recommend not using it for cooking

Is it safe to paddle board, kayak, canoe or boat?

- Activities that disturb the water surface are generally not recommended
- Toxins can be aerosolized, leading to inhalation and skin contact

What is LWA doing about it?

- Water Quality Monitoring
- Watershed Management Plans
- Restoration Projects
- Cyanobacteria Tracking Map
- Education and Outreach
- Free Property Assessments (Winni Blue/LakeSmart)

“WHEN IN DOUBT, STAY OUT!”

