

# Have you been “slimed”?

Contact with blue-green algae can make you sick.

When blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) form “blooms” in lakes, ponds or rivers, these organisms can release toxins which can make people and animals sick. These large mats of algae can form underwater, rising to the surface overnight, and they sometimes have a bad smell. These “blue-green” algae also can be brown or red in color and can sometimes look like thick paint spilled in the water.

## How To Protect Yourself From Blue-Green Algae Toxins:

- **Avoid contact with large mats of blue-green algae.**
- **NEVER allow children or pets to play in or drink scummy water.**
- **Do not waterski or jet ski over algae mats.**
- **Do not use scummy water for cleaning or irrigation.**
- **If you accidentally come into contact with a blue-green algae bloom, wash thoroughly, paying special attention to the swimsuit area and pets’ fur.**

If you think you have symptoms that may be related to contact with blue-green algae, contact your doctor or the Poison Information Hotline at (888)232-8635.

This poster was developed by the Florida Harmful Algal Bloom Task Force in cooperation with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission.

For more information about blue-green algae, visit the Florida Marine Research Institute at [www.floridamarine.org](http://www.floridamarine.org)

*Swimming* in water with a toxic blue-green algae bloom can cause:

- skin rash
- runny nose
- irritated eyes

*Swallowing* such water can:

- cause vomiting or diarrhea
- affect your liver
- poison pets

