



County of Santa Cruz

Health Services Agency - Environmental Health

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PRESS RELEASE

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA – Due to lower water levels, warm temperatures and an unseasonal rain event, Santa Cruz County is experiencing a higher-than-normal frequency of naturally occurring algal blooms. While some algae are harmless, others such as cyanobacteria can release toxins that pose a risk to animals and humans.

Led by Santa Cruz County Environmental Health, current algal blooms are undergoing testing to determine any toxicity levels. During the presence of an algal bloom, people and pets should not have contact with or drink the water. This includes coastal lakes and lagoons, and any outflows across local beaches.

Toxins from blue-green algae (cyanobacteria) can be fatal to pets. Health risks to humans include respiratory problems, liver problems, skin rashes, and gastro-intestinal upsets. Brownish or rust-colored algal blooms should also be avoided. Residents should heed posted advisories and wash your skin with clean water should an exposure occur.

For questions or further information, please visit Santa Cruz Environmental Health's website at www.scceh.com. Suspected harmful algal blooms or related illnesses can be reported to the California Water Quality Monitoring Council at (916) 341-5357 or toll free at (844) 729-6466.