



Media Release

For Immediate Release: 7.19.2018

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Onondaga County Health Department and City of Syracuse Water Department Release Harmful Algal Bloom Information

Testing occurring weekly; results posted online

SYRACUSE, N.Y. – After algae conditions in 2017 in Skaneateles Lake, the Onondaga County Health Department and the City of Syracuse are proactively planning, testing water and providing information to customers receiving Skaneateles Lake water from a municipal system, so the community can be prepared if conditions develop again this summer.

The County Health Department and City Water Department are working together with the New York State Department of Health to actively monitor the water in Skaneateles Lake for Harmful Algal Blooms (HAB). Testing is currently taking place weekly at both water intakes. To date, no toxins have been detected. All results are posted online here: [Water Sample Results](#). Additional information on HAB, including a list of frequently asked questions, can be found here: [Blue-Green Algae](#).

While the federal guidelines are based on ten consecutive days of sustained elevated levels of HAB, the New York State and Onondaga County Health Departments have decided to take a more diligent approach and will make advisories when we are alerted to two consecutive days of confirmed levels of concern. Advisories would include information on maintaining temporary water supplies and public availability of alternative source of drinking water.

The following municipalities receive water from Skaneateles Lake: The City of Syracuse, portions of the Town of Dewitt, the Village of Skaneateles, the Town of Skaneateles, the Town of Elbridge, the Village of Elbridge and the Village of Jordan.

The Health Department reminds those residents who draw water directly from Skaneateles Lake through near-shore PRIVATE INTAKES that they should never drink untreated surface water, whether or not harmful algal blooms are present. Even if the water is treated by in-home treatment units, you should not drink the water directly from the lake and should not use the water for making infant formula, making ice, brushing teeth, preparing food, and washing dishes when blooms are present. In-home treatments such as boiling, ultraviolet radiation (UV), and water filtration units do not remove the toxins associated with harmful algal blooms. Since individual water supplies are not regulated or monitored, it is not known if there is a health risk to drinking the water from your private water supply.

The Health Department recommends taking the following precautions where a HAB is present:

- Do not drink the water
- Do not swim, wade, or fish near algae blooms or surface scums
- Do not let dogs wade, drink the water, or walk on shoreline debris
- Rinse yourself and pets with clean water if exposed to algae

Anyone who has come into contact with the algae bloom or surface scum and has skin or eye irritation or gastrointestinal illness should contact their health care provider.

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