



# Blue-Green Algae (BGA)

## Know the Facts!

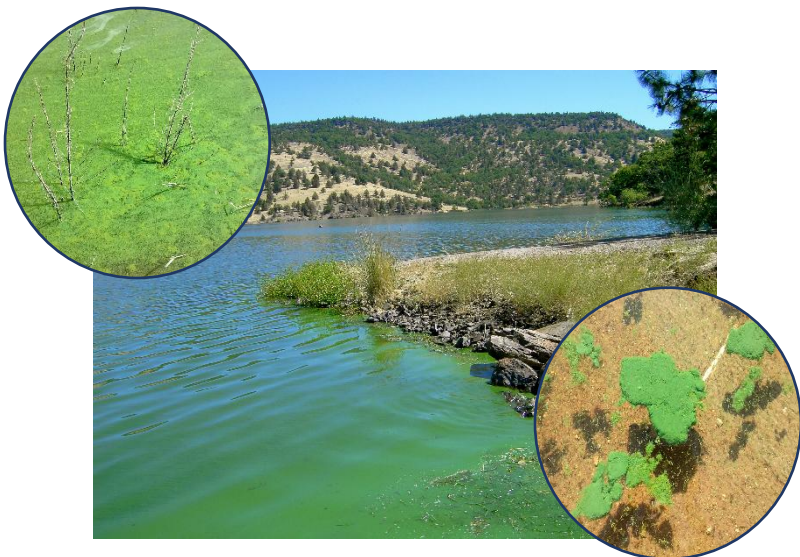
### WHAT ARE BLUE-GREEN ALGAE?

Blue-green algae (BGA, also known as cyanobacteria) are free-floating, microscopic organisms that are naturally present in rivers, lakes, streams, and reservoirs.

They are commonly found in low numbers but can become abundant at times, especially in very warm areas that are shallow, undisturbed, and receive copious amounts of sunlight. In these conditions, BGA may rapidly reproduce.

### HOW TO IDENTIFY A BGA BLOOM:

- Cloudy or deep green algae growth can indicate a “bloom” of BGA. Blooms can also change the color of the water to green, blue, brown, and red.
- BGA can resemble “spilled paint” or pea-soup on the water surface and creates a thick mat of foam along the shoreline or beach.



### WHAT ARE THE RISKS?

**BGA can be harmful to humans, animals, and the environment.**

- Toxins produced by BGA can cause a variety of reactions, including:
  - Upper-respiratory problems
  - Eye irritation
  - Vomiting and diarrhea
- **Consumption or inhalation of BGA can be unsafe!**
- Children are typically more vulnerable, as they tend to not be as cautious as adults when playing in water and are more likely to accidentally drink or swallow water while swimming.
- Pets and livestock are particularly susceptible to the harmful effects of BGA. Do not let pets and livestock drink or wade in contaminated waters.
- **BGA can make both people and animals very ill and potentially cause death.**
- **When in doubt, never go into or play in waters that:**
  - **Smell bad**
  - **Look discolored**
  - **Have foam, scum, or algae mats present on the surface**
  - **Have dead fish or other animals along the shores.**

For more information, please visit:

- [CDC.GOV/HABS](https://www.cdc.gov/habs)
- [DEQ.OK.GOV](https://www.deq.ok.gov)