

## Toxic algae warning issued for waterfront

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Public health officials are warning Hamiltonians to keep their kids and their dogs out of the water at the west end of the harbour.

And don't eat any fish caught there.

That's because there is a lot of potential toxic blue-green-algae in that area.

Health officials emphasized the situation does not affect the city's drinking water supply.

Warning signs have been posted.

Dr. Elizabeth Richardson, Hamilton's medical officer of health issued the warning late Thursday, warning the algae can be detected by a noticeable green surface scum or green discoloration of the water.

But, she added, "blue-green algae can be present in the water even in the absence of a visible scum and not all surface scums are toxic since they can be also caused by other, non toxic algae."

The presence of blue-green algae (known as cyanobacteria) along the shoreline of the western harbour seems to be widespread, spotted in several places including Bayfront Park boat launch, Pier 4 beach, Leander Boat Club, the police marine unit area and the Fisherman's Pier.

Some blue green algae have the potential to produce toxins or skin irritants.

They can make you sick if you swallow water contaminated with blue-green algae toxins and, these toxins can cause headaches, fever, diarrhea, abdominal pain, nausea or vomiting, skin rashes and mucous membrane irritation if you get enough of it.

For more information, please call the public Health Services safe water hotline at 905-546-2189 or visit [www.hamilton.ca/safewater](http://www.hamilton.ca/safewater).

More information about Blue-green algae can also be found at:

[http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/water-eau/drink-potab/cyanobacteria-cyanobacteries\\_e.html](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ewh-semt/water-eau/drink-potab/cyanobacteria-cyanobacteries_e.html) and

[http://www.who.int/water\\_sanitation\\_health/diseases/cyanobacteria/en/](http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/diseases/cyanobacteria/en/)