



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Bri Eichstaedt REHS/RS
Health Director

CITY OF EASTHAMPTON

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Nicole LaChapelle
Mayor

May 23, 2022

IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Possible Cyanobacteria Algae Blooms in Rubber Thread Pond

The Easthampton Health Department has identified a possible cyanobacteria algae bloom in **Rubber Thread Pond (located behind 50 Payson Ave. parking lot)**. Photographs were sent to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Toxicology Program for confirmation. After review, the MDPH Toxicology Program confirmed the photos provided indicate the possible presence of cyanobacteria (algae) cells that may exceed the MDPH guidelines for recreational water bodies in Massachusetts. The MDPH recommends posting public advisories at all access points of the ponds to notify residents that water should be avoided. The MDPH Toxicology Program will conduct follow-up sampling once the bloom is no longer evident. The MDPH requires two samples below the guideline level to be taken one week apart to recommend rescinding the advisory.

The following should be avoided:

- Contact with the water
- Swimming (including pets)
- Fishing
- Kayaking/Boating

Algae blooms can be caused by:

- Warm weather
- Sunlight
- Excess nutrients in the water, such as fertilizer and human/animal waste
- Stormwater runoff
- Failing septic systems



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Health concerns from harmful algae blooms vary depending on the type of exposure and the amounts:

- Contact with these algae can cause skin and eye irritation
- Ingesting small amounts can cause gastrointestinal symptoms. Ingesting large amounts of toxins may cause liver or neurological damage
- Inhaling water spray with algae in it can cause asthma-like symptoms
- Small children and pets are more susceptible to the effects of toxins than adults. Livestock and pet deaths from ingesting algal toxins have occurred. Dogs should be rinsed off immediately if they come into contact with an algae bloom

If you believe you or your pet came into contact with these algae, you should immediately wash yourself/pet with clean water and contact your primary care physician or veterinarian.

Signage will be posted at all known access points. The Easthampton Health Department is advising residents and their pets to avoid contact with this water until the advisory is lifted. The Easthampton Health Department will notify the public once the advisory is lifted.

More information can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/harmful-algae-blooms-in-fresh-water-bodies>

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Rubber Thread Pond
Photo taken 5/23/22