GCHD
GRANT COUNTY HEALTH DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE 07/15/19	FOR INFORMATION CONTACT
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GCHD Advises Public to Avoid Contact with Moses Lake

First blue-green algae sample of the season shows toxin is back

MOSE LAKE, WA- On Tuesday, July 9th, 2019, the Grant County Health District (GCHD) collected water samples of Moses Lake in response to a suspect blue-green algae bloom after receiving reports from concerned citizens. The sample came back with a toxin level at 26µg/L, which is higher than the Washington State recreational guidelines of 6µg/L for microcystin toxins. The sample was collected from Connelly Park. It is reasonable to assume that blue-green algae could be present in all parts of Moses Lake. GCHD has posted warning signs around Moses Lake that will be up until the lake is clear of the toxic algae. GCHD volunteers from the Cyanobacteria Surveillance by Citizens, Users, and Managers (CSCUM) monitoring group will continue testing the lake weekly throughout the season.

GCHD is advising:

- Avoid all contact with Moses Lake water areas
  - Including recreational water activities (skiing, wakeboarding, etc.)
- Do not drink the lake water
- Keep all pets & livestock away from the lake water
- Clean fish caught in Moses Lake well and discard their guts

Sampling activities are currently being coordinated through the CSCUM group overseen by GCHD; GCHD does not need any more volunteers to sample at this time. Sampling resources are limited this year, so please contact GCHD for sampling information. Weekly sample results will be posted to the GCHD website at http://granthealth.org/blue-green-algae/.

Health & Safety Information:

The type of blue-green algae that is present in Moses Lake produce Microcystin toxin, which can cause serious illness in people, pets, and livestock.

- Symptoms may take 30 minutes to 24 hours to appear, depending upon the size of the person or animal affected and the amount of toxic bloom consumed. Microcystin toxicosis may include allergic reactions from rashes to gastrointestinal distress from nausea/vomiting, abdominal pain/distention, whole body weakness, severe thirst from dehydration, jaundice, rapid/weak pulse, and rarely to shock progressing to death.

What is blue-green algae Bloom?
These algae blooms grow rapidly in fresh water when there is enough sunlight, high temperatures, and nutrients in the water. It often looks like green paint floating on the water. It is common for Grant County waters to have blue-green algae in the summer and fall, but not all blue-green algae blooms are toxic.

- Pet owners should not allow their pets to play in or drink water where blue-green algae are present as these toxins can kill pets.

What are the signs of toxic blue-green algae?

- Large number of dead fish, birds, or other animals.
- Sudden and unexplained sickness or death of a dog or cat who has recently been in contact with fresh water such as a lake or pond, especially if it has algae on its mouth, legs or feet.
- People can develop skin rashes after being in the water or become ill.

How Can I Be Exposed to Cyanobacterial Toxins?
For the blue-green algae toxins, drinking contaminated water is the primary exposure. Exposure may also occur by drinking or eating food contaminated with the toxin, including fish; by inhaling and skin contact during bathing or showering; and during recreational activities

Additional Resources
Blue-Green Algae I WA DOH
Washington State Toxic Algae I WA DOH & WA Department of Ecology
Freshwater Water Quality Information I WA Department of Ecology
Toxic Algae Database | Find out which freshwater lakes have toxic algae (WA Dept of Ecology)
Blue-Green Algae Illness I CDC
Toxic Blue-Green Algae Blooms Brochure [PDF]

Consultation
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