Recreational use advisory issued for South Tenmile Lake Sept. 27, 2019

The Oregon Health Authority (OHA) issued a recreational use health advisory today for South Tenmile Lake due to the presence of a cyanobacterial (harmful algae) bloom and cyanotoxins (harmful algae toxins) above recreational guideline values for human exposure. The lake is in Coos County.

People should avoid swimming and high-speed water activities, such as water skiing or power boating, in areas of the lake where blooms are identified. Although toxins are not absorbed through the skin, people who have skin sensitivities may experience a puffy red rash.

People are encouraged to visit South Tenmile Lake and enjoy activities such as fishing, camping, hiking, biking, picnicking, and bird watching. Boating is safe as long as speeds do not create excessive water spray, which could lead to inhalation risk.

Drinking water

Drinking water directly from areas of the lake affected by a bloom is especially dangerous. Toxins cannot be removed by boiling, filtering or treating water with camping-style filters. Contact campground management or the local health department with questions about water available at nearby campgrounds or day use areas.

People who are not on a well or a public water system and draw in-home water directly from an affected area are advised to use an alternative water source because not all private treatment systems are proven effective in removing cyanotoxins.
Children and pets

Children and pets are at increased risk for exposure because of their size and level of activity. People who bring their pets to a lake with areas affected by a bloom for recreation activities, regardless of whether a recreational use health advisory is in place, should take special precautions to keep them from drinking from or swimming in these areas. Dogs can also be exposed to cyanotoxins when present by licking their fur, licking cyanobacteria off rocks or eating cells from a bloom.

Fishing

Fish caught from areas where cyanobacterial blooms are present should have fat, skin and organs removed before cooking or freezing, as toxins are more likely to collect in these tissues. Fillets should also be rinsed with clean water.

Symptoms

Exposure to cyanotoxins can be serious and result in a range of symptoms, from those similar to food poisoning such as stomach cramping, diarrhea, nausea and vomiting, to more serious symptoms like numbness, tingling, dizziness and shortness of breath that may require medical attention.

For health information or to report an illness, contact OHA at 971-673-0482.

Learn more here.

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