

# Dept. of Natural Resources: Summer know-how - algae to invasives

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Sunday marks the official first day of summer! On hot days, many of us head to Wisconsin's beaches to cool off.

Wisconsin waters provide wildlife habitat, recreation areas and tourist destinations. But they're not without risk, so it's [important to keep an eye on beach conditions before you go](#). Beaches may be closed or post swimming advisories due to spills, dangerous currents, elevated bacteria and more.

## **While You're Out: Protect Your Pets From Blue-Green Algae**

Blue-green algae are a serious concern for beachgoers and their pets. [Also known as Cyanobacteria, blue-green algae are group of photosynthetic bacteria that many people refer to as "pond scum."](#)

Blue-green algae generally grow in lakes, ponds and slow-moving streams when the water is warm and enriched with nutrients like phosphorus or nitrogen. Most lakes in Wisconsin are not tested for blue-green algae, so learn what it looks like and always assess conditions for yourself before you swim.

Blue-green algae can have [harmful effects on humans and pets](#). However, because pets love to spend time in water, are not deterred by a little surface scum and often swallow a lot of water while swimming, they can be more vulnerable.

Dogs won't instinctively know if the water is safe when they jump in, so keep them out of unsafe conditions and prevent them from drinking untreated water. Choose the clearest water possible for dogs to swim in, and keep dogs out of areas with accumulations of blue-green algae or any dense particulate matter. Specifically:

- Do not let pets swim in, or drink, waters experiencing blue-green algae blooms

or noticeably green water.

- Keep dogs out of shallow, stagnant waters where blue-green algae may be growing on the bottom and dislodged by disturbance. If people shouldn't swim there, dogs shouldn't either.
- Always offer fresh, clean water for pets to drink instead of lake water.
- Always wash dogs off with clean water immediately after they swim, so they don't lick any algae from their fur.
- Supervise pets when they are outside, so they don't eat algal scum accumulated on the shore, floating mats of algae or drink lake water.
- If your pets eat grass, avoid using lake water for lawn irrigation if blooms are present.
- If there's any doubt about what is in the water, keeping your pets out is the safest bet.

Water intoxication (from swallowing too much water) and heat stroke in dogs share the symptoms of vomiting, diarrhea, lethargy and loss of coordination with blue-green algae poisoning. Give dogs plenty of breaks from swimming and retrieving in lakes, avoid having dogs bite at splashed water as a game and use flat objects for retrieval instead of balls. Always provide shade and fresh, clean water to drink.

For more information, [view the Wisconsin Department of Health Services' fact sheets](#) and [the DNR's website](#).

## **Invasive Species Action Month: Simple Steps To Stop The Spread**

It's Invasive Species Action Month!

Take action this month and throughout the year by taking simple precautions to avoid spreading invasive, nonnative plants and animals in our woods, waters and lands.

Here are some tips hikers, boaters, campers, gardeners and others can follow to prevent the establishment and spread of invasives:

- Hikers and campers should clean mud and dirt off their shoes and remove seeds and burs from their clothing before visiting other places.
- Firewood is a significant pathway for the movement of many invasive insects and pathogens such as emerald ash borer, gypsy moth and oak wilt disease. To help protect the state's trees where you live, play or camp, use local

firewood to avoid moving pests to new places.

- Anglers and boaters can help protect vulnerable areas from aquatic invasives by cleaning recreational equipment and gear after every use.
- Drain all water from gear before leaving a site and wash it with 140-degree water or steam to remove invasives too small to see. Drying gear for five or more days between use also helps destroy invasive organisms.
- Gardeners are encouraged to plant and promote beautiful native plants that can benefit pollinators, birds and other wildlife or traditional gardening plants that are noninvasive. Gardeners can also look for and remove potential problem plants.

[Visit the DNR's invasive species webpages to learn more ways to prevent invasive species from establishing in Wisconsin.](#)

### **Leave No Trace: 7 Steps To Minimal Impact**

Try to imagine 1,000 people on the Wisconsin River on a hot summer weekend. Then try to imagine the waste they will create.

Anglers, campers and sunbathers all generate waste. You can make a difference in our parks, waterways and natural areas by following the seven

[Leave No Trace](#) principles:

- Plan Ahead and Prepare
- Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- Dispose of Waste Properly
- Leave What You Find
- Minimize Campfire Impacts
- Respect Wildlife
- Be Considerate of Other Visitors

[Learn more about how to Leave No Trace before heading outdoors.](#)

### **Plan A Hike With Your Pet: Things To Know Before You Go**

What's better than hiking with your pet?

Responsible pet owners and their pets are welcome in most Wisconsin State Parks and State Natural Areas. There are a few simple rules to ensure that you, your pet

and other visitors will enjoy the park.

Here's what you need to know before planning a trip with your furry friend:

- Pets must be kept on a leash no longer than 8 ft., unless they are being used for hunting purposes in areas that are open to hunting during the established season.
- Pets must be under control at all times. Pet owners are not allowed to let their pets interfere in any manner with other people's enjoyment of the park.
- Loose pets may be seized and are subject to local laws pertaining to stray animals. Owners of loose pets may be ticketed. If your pet is lost, inform a park ranger and immediately call the local authorities to find the location of the nearest stray-holding facility.
- Pet owners are responsible for the proper removal and disposal of their pets' waste products. Waste should be disposed of in dumpsters or trash receptacles.
- Remember that certain areas of parks are off limits to pets.

[Brush up on the rules before you head out on your next adventure.](#)