

NEWS RELEASE

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For Immediate Release

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Swanson Reservoir Health Alert

Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) has been notified of high levels of toxic algae at Swanson Reservoir, also known as Trenton Lake, located in Hitchcock County. This means the water is currently unsafe and should be avoided. This is the first time a lake in the health district has had a harmful algal bloom in many years.

“With the assistance of DHHS, we carefully monitor our lakes weekly during the summer for potential health risks, including these toxic algae,” explained Melissa Propp, Clinic Manager at SWNPHD. “Avoid contact with the water and please use caution over the next couple of weeks until this lake is no longer under the health alert.”

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) conducts weekly testing for Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs), also known as toxic blue-green algae, from May through September. This testing is done because HABs can produce dangerous toxins that can make people and animals sick. Nebraska Game and Parks may post signs throughout the area to alert residents and visitors about the risks.

Symptoms of exposure to toxic algae depend on how you were exposed. Skin contact like swimming or other water activities can lead to rashes or blisters on the skin or inside the eyes, nose or mouth. Swallowing the water can cause stomach pain, headaches, vomiting, diarrhea, muscle weakness, or liver damage. People who eat fish that have these toxins in them may also have these symptoms.

Avoid getting sick by staying out of the water and keeping your pets out of the water. Rinse off immediately if you do get exposed to the water, and do not let pets lick their fur until they have been rinsed.

If you get symptoms after being exposed to toxic algae, contact your healthcare provider. Let them know you might have come into contact with an algal bloom or its toxins. There are no special treatments, but they can help you manage your symptoms.

For more information call SWNPHD at 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins, and Red Willow counties. The website swhealth.ne.gov contains many resources and additional information helpful to prevent disease, promote wellness, and protect health. You can also follow SWNPHD on Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok.

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