



**Ted Strickland**  
Governor

**Alvin D. Jackson, M.D.**  
Director  
Ohio Department of Health

**Chris Korleski**  
Director  
Environmental Protection Agency

**Sean D. Logan**  
Director  
Department of Natural Resources

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**MEDIA CONTACT:** Dina Pierce, (614) 644-2160  
**CITIZEN CONTACT:** Darla Peelle, (614) 644-2160

### State Urges Caution for Recreational Activities at Lake

Ohio EPA, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Ohio Department of Health urge people planning to enjoy Memorial Day weekend on Grand Lake St. Marys to be cautious if they have contact with water in the lake. This advisory is for recreational activities on the lake.

Ohio EPA believes there may be a high level of an algal toxin present that can cause minor to severe health issues for humans and animals. The presence of algae in a lake does not mean microcystin toxin also is present. However, during research for a national lake survey, water samples taken by Ohio EPA in the lake did contain microcystin levels above World Health Organization standards for recreational contact. Ohio EPA is currently awaiting a full analysis of the samples from a national laboratory.

The public drinking water supply in Celina remains safe. In the past week, the Celina drinking water system, in conjunction with Ohio EPA and Ohio Department of Natural Resources, conducted follow-up sampling that confirmed the toxin is not present in Celina's treated drinking water. Testing did indicate microcystin continues to be present in untreated water.

Most of the algae present in the lake is a bluegreen algae called Planktothrix, which produces a microcystin toxin that potentially can cause skin rashes from dermal (skin) contact; sore throat, runny eyes and nose or allergic reactions from inhaling water droplets; and gastro-intestinal distress (vomiting, diarrhea) from swallowing the water. It also can be toxic to the liver and kidneys if ingested in significant quantities.

It also is a neurotoxin that can cause weakness or dizziness, breathing difficulty and convulsions. Further, it can sometimes cause death in small animals, such as dogs, that ingest water containing microcystin toxin.

People should use similar precautions as they would in any non-chlorinated surface water. People and pets are advised to minimize contact with and avoid ingestion of the lake water.

Additional information is available at the following Web links: The Great Lakes Sea Grant Extension Office at <http://www.glerl.noaa.gov/seagrant/GLWL/Algae/HAB/HABFAQ.html>; and the Centers for Disease Control at <http://www.cdc.gov/hab/cyanobacteria/facts.htm>.