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News Release

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**Lab Results: Celina Drinking Water Clear;
Limit Physical Contact with Grand Lake St. Marys Water**

Laboratory analysis of new water samples from Grand Lake St. Marys confirm that increased levels of a toxin produced by bluegreen algae are present in the lake. No toxin was found in treated drinking water for the city of Celina, according to the lab results.

The most recent analysis of five water samples collected on May 20, 2009, from Grand Lake St. Marys ranged from 48 to 82 micrograms per liter ($\mu\text{g/l}$), indicating an elevated, but moderate health risk for lake recreation. The World Health Organization standard for low-risk recreational contact is less than 20 $\mu\text{g/l}$.

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. Non-contact recreation, such as boating, fishing and sunbathing, should not result in problems. However, activities such as swimming, jet skiing and water skiing are not recommended due to a higher potential for ingestion of lake water.

The state will begin sampling the lake's water weekly throughout the summer to monitor levels of microcystin. Ohio EPA is monitoring the lake's conditions in conjunction with the Celina public water system, Ohio Department of Natural Resources, Ohio Department of Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Most of the algae present in the lake is a bluegreen algae called Planktothrix, which produces a microcystin toxin that potentially can cause skins 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.

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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.

On Thursday, Ohio EPA, Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Ohio Department of Health urged people to be cautious and minimize their contact with the lake's water while recreating this weekend. That advisory remains in place for recreational activities, such as boating, skiing and swimming.

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>.

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<http://www.epa.state.oh.us>