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News Release

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Toxic Algae Alert Issued for Kitsap Lake

BREMERTON, WA --- The Kitsap County Health District today issued a public health advisory for Kitsap Lake (west of Bremerton) due to the presence of a toxic blue-green algae bloom in the lake. Preliminary analysis of the blue-green algae collected on October, 9, 2008, revealed that the bloom is producing microcystin toxins which, if ingested in sufficient quantities, can make people sick and kill fish, waterfowl, pets, and livestock.

Warning signs have been posted at community access areas around the lake. The Health District will be conducting additional weekly toxicity testing until the bloom subsides. During the advisory, lake area residents and visitors are advised to:

- Avoid ingesting lake water. If a resident draws lake water for drinking purposes, they are encouraged to drink bottled water until further notice.
- Avoid swimming and other water contact sports (especially in areas where the algae are concentrated).
- Limit access of pets and livestock to the lake.
- Clean fish caught in the lake as soon as possible and discard all internal organs.
- Rinse boats and trailers before going to another lake.

Area residents are also advised to contact the Health District at (360) 337-5235 if any one of the following conditions is observed:

- Large numbers of dead fish in the lake.
- Sudden or unexplained sickness or death of a pet cat or dog.
- If someone has entered the water and experiences skin rash, dizziness or weakness, respiratory allergy, abdominal pain, diarrhea, or vomiting.

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Blue-green algae, or cyanobacteria, reproduce rapidly in fresh water when the amount of sunlight, temperature, and nutrients are adequate. Within a few days, a clear lake can become cloudy and discolored with algae growth. This is called a "bloom". Blue-green algae usually float to the surface and can be several inches thick near the shoreline. Usually these blooms look like bright green paint floating on the surface of the water. When they die off, the algae may turn blue, white or brown.

Lake shoreline residents are encouraged to look for blue-green algae blooms in local lakes and call the Health District any time a bloom is observed.

For more information regarding this advisory, contact the Health District's Water Program at (360) 337-5235, Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Additional water quality information is available on the Health District's 24-hour hotline 1-800-2BE-WELL (1-800-223-9355) or by visiting us online at www.kitsapcountyhealth.com.

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