

# 2018 Harmful Algal Bloom (HAB) Season Public Information

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## How does the City of Toledo protect our drinking water from harmful algal blooms?

- The City of Toledo actively works with the Ohio EPA to ensure the public water supply is safe and the Collins Park Water Treatment Plant and distribution system is operating within all regulatory requirements and health guidelines.
- Toledo chemists and operators are on duty 24 hours a day testing and monitoring the water treatment process from the intake crib in Lake Erie through to the Collins Park Water Treatment Plant and into the distribution system.
- During HAB season Toledo has an advance warning system of buoys and data collection devices in Lake Erie for early detection of harmful algal bloom conditions which allows adjustment of water treatment methods starting at the intake crib and throughout the treatment process at the Collins Park Water Treatment Plant.
- Toledo has dramatically improved its ability to treat HABs through enhanced chemical feed and disinfection capabilities and other Ohio-EPA approved upgrades to the Collins Park Water Treatment Plant. The Plant is in year 6 of a 10 year \$500 million plan of capital improvements.

## How Can Citizens Prepare for HAB Season?

- Residents should keep a 3 to 7 day supply of bottled water on hand, or 1-2 gallons of water per person per day.
- Sign up to receive emergency text alerts through the link on the City's website landing page or at [www.lucascountyalerts.com](http://www.lucascountyalerts.com).
- Toledo water customers can check the water quality dashboard status of the drinking water at [www.toledo.oh.gov](http://www.toledo.oh.gov) , "like" us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter to receive real-time updates.

## How does the City of Toledo communicate the status of its Drinking Water Quality during HAB Season?

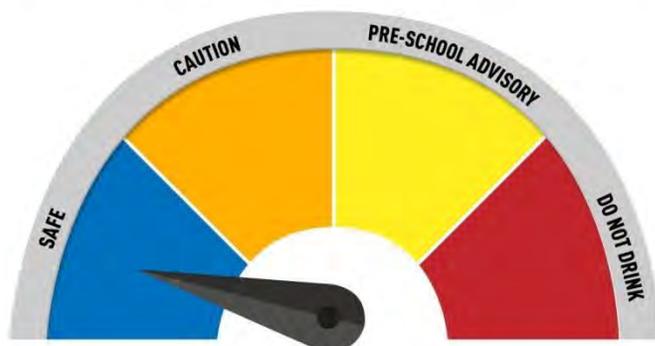
Communication during the Harmful Algal Bloom season will be based on the Drinking Water Quality Dashboard which shows the condition of tap water in four levels from Safe to Do Not Drink.

- Citizens may rely on the dashboard.
- The City of Toledo dashboard is updated by staff at the Water Treatment Plant to provide the accurate drinking water quality status.
- **Information or rumors that are not verified on the Toledo Drinking Water Quality Dashboard should be disregarded.**
- Test results for both tap water and raw lake water will be posted on the City's website.

**PLEASE SEE EASH DASHBOARD BELOW with WHAT TO EXPECT**

### Drinking Water Quality Dashboard

Toledo water professionals test and monitor drinking water quality 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This dashboard is updated by staff at the Collins Park Water treatment plant to provide the public with an accurate drinking water quality status.



**SAFE** – Toledo tap water meets or exceeds all water quality standards.

**SAFE:** Toledo drinking water meets or exceeds all regulatory requirements and health guidelines.

- This is the normal status of Toledo drinking water throughout the year.

## Drinking Water Quality Dashboard

Toledo water professionals test and monitor drinking water quality 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This dashboard is updated by staff at the Collins Park Water treatment plant to provide the public with an accurate drinking water quality status.



**CAUTION** – Microcystin has been detected in tap water. Water remains safe to drink. The “Caution” level will either be downgraded to “Safe” or elevated to an “Advisory” within 48-72 hours.

### What to expect with a CAUTION dashboard status:

Microcystin has been detected in tap water, but test results do not indicate a need to issue an advisory at this time. Water treatment has been accelerated and additional testing and sampling is underway.

- Water is safe to drink. There are no restrictions on water use at this time.
- The Caution level will either be downgraded to Safe or elevated to an Advisory within 48-72 hours.
- This 2-3 day window is less than one-third the 10-day exposure threshold to maintain public health and safety. (The US EPA and Ohio EPA recommend that the public not drink water with microcystin above two threshold levels (0.3/1.6 ppb) for more than 10 days depending primarily on age.)
- The Caution status begins the process of increased sampling and testing, and confirmation testing, while treatment adjustments continue to be made.
- Toledo water customers can tune in to local news channels and the City of Toledo website to check the status of the drinking water.
- Now is the time to check your water supply on hand in the event the Caution dashboard status is elevated.
- Please follow the Drinking Water Quality Dashboard on the City’s website and Face Book page or tune in to local media to stay informed on updates.

## Drinking Water Quality Dashboard

Toledo water professionals test and monitor drinking water quality 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This dashboard is updated by staff at the Collins Park Water treatment plant to provide the public with an accurate drinking water quality status.



**PRE-SCHOOL ADVISORY** – Tap water tests greater than 0.3 ppb but does not exceed 1.6 ppb. A Do Not Drink Advisory is in effect for bottle-fed infants, children 5 and younger, pregnant women, nursing mothers, those with pre-existing liver conditions and those who receive dialysis treatment.

This advisory is limited to consumption of water only. There is no restriction on bathing, washing, handwashing, washing dishes, doing laundry, watering plants, flushing toilets or other normal water uses.

### What to expect during a PRE-SCHOOL ADVISORY

- A Pre-School Advisory is a Do Not Drink/Do Not Boil Advisory for bottle-fed infants, children 5 and younger, pregnant women, nursing mothers, those with pre-existing liver conditions and those who receive dialysis treatment. Tap water tests greater than 0.3 ppb but does not exceed 1.6 ppb.
- Alternative water should be used for drinking, making infant formula, making ice, brushing teeth, and preparing foods for bottle-fed infants, children 5 and younger, pregnant women, nursing mothers, those with preexisting liver conditions and those who receive dialysis treatment.
- Boiling water does not make it safe to drink. (Boiling water increases the concentration of microcystin).
- This advisory is limited to consumption of water only. There is no restriction on bathing, washing, washing hands, washing dishes, doing laundry, watering plants, flushing toilets or other normal water uses. (*Healthcare providers and food service industries may have further restrictions.*)
- Additional health information is available on the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department website at <http://www.lucascountyhealth.com>.
- If needed, water distribution will be coordinated through the Lucas County Emergency Management Agency.
- Follow the Drinking Water Quality Dashboard status on the City's website and Face Book page or tune in to local media to stay informed on updates.

## Drinking Water Quality Dashboard

Toledo water professionals test and monitor drinking water quality 24 hours a day, every day of the year. This dashboard is updated by staff at the Collins Park Water treatment plant to provide the public with an accurate drinking water quality status.



**DO NOT DRINK ADVISORY** – Tap water tests greater than 1.6 ppb. A Do Not Drink Advisory is in effect for all Toledo water customers.

Alternative water should be used for drinking, making infant formula, making ice, brushing teeth and preparing foods. Boiling water does not make it safe to drink.

This advisory is limited to consumption of water only. There is no restriction on bathing, washing, handwashing, washing dishes, doing laundry, watering plants, flushing toilets or other normal water uses.

### What to expect in a Do Not Drink Advisory

- Do Not Drink/Do Not Boil Advisory is in effect for all Toledo water customers. Tap water tests greater than 1.6 ppb.
- Alternative water should be used for drinking, making infant formula, making ice, brushing teeth, and preparing foods.
- Boiling water does not make it safe to drink. (Boiling water increases the concentration of microcystin)
- This advisory is limited to consumption of water only. There is no restriction on bathing, washing, washing hands, washing dishes, doing laundry, watering plants, flushing toilets or other normal water uses. (*Healthcare providers and food service industries may have further restrictions.*)
- Additional health information is available on the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department website at <http://www.lucascountyhealth.com>.
- If needed, water distribution will be coordinated through the Lucas County EMA.
- Follow the Drinking Water Quality Dashboard status on the City's website and Face Book page or tune in to local media to stay informed on updates.

## **Drinking Water Advisories protect the public from adverse health effects by limiting potential exposure to microcystin.**

### **Background**

EPA issued two microcystin health advisory levels based primarily on age and a 10-day exposure period. EPA recommends threshold levels at or below 0.3 ppb in drinking water for children pre-school age (5) and younger. For school-age children (6) through adults, the recommended health advisory levels for drinking water are at or below 1.6 ppb for microcystin.

Public Health Advisories for microcystin are designed with a safety factor of 1000 to avoid negative health impacts. –US EPA

### **What does this mean?**

The US EPA and Ohio EPA recommend that the public not drink water with microcystin above two threshold levels (0.3/1.6 ppb) for more than 10 days depending primarily on age.

### **How will we know when the threshold is reached?**

The Ohio EPA and the City of Toledo are working together so that if microcystin is present beyond recommended thresholds (amount and time) the public will be informed by a Do Not Drink Advisory.

### **How is the public notified of a Drinking Water Advisory?**

The public is made aware of the status of its drinking water quality, including if needed, any Drinking Water Advisories through the Water Quality Dashboard at [www.toledo.oh.gov](http://www.toledo.oh.gov), broadcast media, electronic billboards, Toledo-Lucas County Health Department website, and via the Lucas County Text Alert system (for those who sign up for Toledo text alerts from its webpage above or at [www.lucascountyalerts.com](http://www.lucascountyalerts.com).)

### **How do I know if my home or business is affected?**

Unless you receive specific information that you are *not* included, it is best to follow Do Not Drink advisories.

In addition to City of Toledo consumers, the following communities purchase Toledo water:

- Lucas County
- Portions of Fulton County
- South County Water in Monroe County, Michigan
- Maumee
- Perrysburg
- Whitehouse
- Northwestern Water & Sewer District serving Northwood, Rossford and portions of Wood County

### **I/my child accidentally consumed water during a Pre-School or Do Not Drink Advisory. What do we do now?**

- Switch to an alternate drinking water source once you hear an advisory is in effect.
- If you learned of the Do Not Drink Advisory a day or two into the event, you are still within a safe period. –Toledo Lucas County Health Department
- If you have consumed water during a Do Not Drink over an extended period, monitor for abnormal behavior and symptoms. Individuals with symptoms should seek medical assistance.
- Unless your child is sick there is no need to go to the emergency room. – Toledo Lucas County Health Department

### **How long will the Advisory last?**

While the utility does not believe there would be a lengthy duration should an advisory occur, repetitive testing will be necessary to make certain that the microcystin is below health advisory levels throughout the distribution system. Therefore, no specific time may be given.

### **What are the possible effects of microcystin?**

Consuming water containing microcystin above health advisory levels for periods beyond 10 days may result in abnormal liver function, diarrhea, vomiting, nausea, numbness or dizziness.

### **During a Drinking Water Advisory, can I take a shower?**

Yes. Drinking water advisories are specific for human consumption of water only and do not pertain to other water uses. There are no restrictions on bathing, washing dishes, doing laundry, watering plants, and other normal uses of water according to the Ohio EPA.

### **How much water containing microcystin is consumed for a negative health impact?**

This is dependent on many different factors. US EPA Public Health Advisories of 0.3 ppb and 1.6 ppb by age group and a 10-day exposure period are designed with a safety factor of 1000 to avoid negative health impacts. –US EPA

### **Are elevated microcystin levels a concern for pets for their drinking water?**

- The US EPA Public Health Advisories are for humans. Although there is little research on this, the Ohio EPA suggests using alternative water for pets and livestock as a precautionary measure.
- Veterinarians may be consulted with specific questions.

### **What does “ppb” mean?**

PPB stands for “parts per billion” and is equal to a single drop of water in an Olympic-size swimming pool or one blade of grass on a football field.

### **I filter my water at home with carbon—Does this help?**

No. Carbon filters can hold the toxin. Follow manufacturers’ recommendations for replacement. – Toledo Lucas County Health Department

### **Will I have to flush my plumbing system when the advisory is lifted?**

- Toledo tests water from throughout its distribution system to establish when water is cleared for all uses, including drinking. Citizens may, after an advisory is lifted, run each faucet until it is cold, indicating the fresh stream of water from the water mains has reached the home or business.

### **Will I have to change the filters in my home water filter system or icemaker when the advisory is lifted?**

- Depending on filters, they may hold toxins and would need to be replaced.

Follow manufacturers' recommendations for replacement.

- Throw away all ice from icemakers, and the first batch of ice, and change any icemaker filters according to manufacturers' recommendations. – Toledo-Lucas County Health Department
- Additional information is available at the Toledo-Lucas County Health Department. <http://www.lucascountyhealth.com>

### **Should I avoid elective medical procedures during a Caution, Pre-School or Do Not Drink Advisory?**

Contact your physician or hospital for information.

### **What about dialysis?**

Contact your dialysis center for information.

### **Is there any medication or anything we can take to get rid of the toxin if we ingested it?**

Only supportive treatment is provided if needed for longer term exposure with symptoms. –Toledo Lucas County Health Department

**Are there any restrictions on restaurants during a Pre-School Advisory?** Yes. They must comply with guidelines provided through local health departments. See more information at <http://www.lucascountyhealth.com>.

### **Where can I find more information?**

To learn more about the Health Advisories for microcystins, visit EPA's Health Advisory webpage: <http://water.epa.gov/drink/standards/hascience.cfm>.

To learn about additional strategies Public Water Systems and others could consider in managing cyanotoxins, visit EPA's CyanoHABs website: <http://www2.epa.gov/nutrient-policy-data/guidelines-and-recommendations>.