DON’T LET SWIMMING MAKE YOU SICK
PREVENTING WATERBORNE ILLNESS IN KITSAP WATERS

WHAT IS WATERBORNE ILLNESS?
Toxic algae, bacteria, viruses, or parasites in the water can make you sick.

REDUCING YOUR RISK
• Avoid areas with algae, large number of swimmers, aquatic plants, snails, and waterfowl.
• Don’t swim if you’re sick.
• Use good hygiene:
  • Avoid ingesting lake or stream water.
  • Don’t let children who are not toilet trained play in the water.
  • Wash your hands with soap and water after using the toilet, changing diapers, and before handling food.
• After swimming, immediately shower and vigorously towel dry.

SWIMMER’S ITCH
When a small waterborne parasite burrows under the skin of a swimmer, the result is an intense itching rash called swimmer’s itch.
Treatment:
• Relieve itching with calamine lotion or an antihistamine, such as Benadryl.
• Consult your doctor if the rash continues or if white bumps or pus appear; rash rarely requires medical attention.

CYANOBACTERIA / BLUE-GREEN ALGAE
When cyanobacteria organisms reproduce rapidly in fresh water the lake can become discolored with a “bloom.”

Blooms:
• Are most common in the summer and fall
• May appear bright green, blue, brown or red-green
• May be toxic and cause serious illness
• May leave toxins in the water even after the bloom has subsided

Signs of toxic cyanobacteria:
• Sudden sickness or death of pets or livestock
• Large amount of dead fish in lake
• Skin rash after being in the water

Symptoms of toxic cyanobacteria poisoning:
• Signs can appear within 15 minutes or even hours or days. Seek medical care immediately for the following:
  • Numbness of the lips
  • Tingling in the fingers and toes
  • Dizziness

• In pets or livestock:
  • Weakness, staggering
  • Difficulty breathing
  • Dizziness

REPORT ANY ILLNESS OR CYANOBACTERIA BLOOM!
Help keep our community a safe place. 360-728-2235 or visit our website. You can also sign up to receive water quality alerts.