



SEEING ORANGE SLIME?

IT MAY NOT BE A THREAT

If you have noticed an orange or reddish-brown slime in your local creek or drainage, don't be alarmed. Most of the time, it is simply iron bacteria. These bacteria are harmless and don't cause disease in humans or animals. While they can stain clothing and may have an unpleasant odor, they are not a health threat.

IT'S LIKELY A NATURAL PROCESS

Iron bacteria are common, and live in fresh and saltwater as well as in soils. They combine oxygen and iron in the water to form reddish-brown masses on stream bottoms and lake shorelines.

These bacteria can also produce an oily sheen on the surface of the water. You can tell the difference between an iron bacteria and a petroleum sheen by odor, and by doing the "stick or rock test." Poke the sheen with a stick or throw a rock into it. If the sheen breaks apart, it is probably due to iron bacteria.



KITSAP PUBLIC
HEALTH DISTRICT

345 6th Street
Suite 300
Bremerton, WA
98337

360-728-2235
360-813-1379 (fax)

Iron bacteria can be seen any time of the year, but they are most common during the spring and fall.

If you have concerns about deposits that don't appear to be iron bacteria, call us—or visit our website and click on Report a Public Health Concern.

To safeguard the health and safety of our community, we monitor water quality in Kitsap streams, lakes and shorelines. These surface waters are equally as important as the groundwater we drink.

Our job is to ensure our surface waterways are safe and sanitary so you don't get sick when you swim in them or eat the shellfish that live in them. Our water quality program is nationally recognized for its innovation and effectiveness.