

Name: Atilia [REDACTED]

Grade: 6

Teachers: Curtis Taylor & Jane Spina

School: Harwood Union Remote Academy

### Atilia [REDACTED] - Earth Day Essay

Are you half fish or love to swim? Well not for long. Blue green-algae has started to prevent swimming in some of our favorites spots and will start spreading if we don't do something about it, and fast. Blue-green algae is infiltrating rivers, lakes, and ponds. The common algae is a diverse group of aquatic organisms that have the ability to conduct photosynthesis. However blue-green algae which is often referred to as algae, are not algae at all, but types of bacteria called cyanobacteria (**sai-**

**a·now·bak·tee·ree·uh**). Some of the causes of blue-green algae are runoff from farms containing nitrogen or phosphorus, leaking from septic systems, still or slow-flowing water, or even when the temperature reaches 75 degrees or higher which might seem nice but not for long. Blue-green algae presents a risk to humans who are directly exposed to or consume the algae. Symptoms can include skin irritation, flu-like symptoms, and in

Severe cases could include seizures, liver failure, respiratory arrest even death, although this is rare. Dogs can develop poisoning when they drink from or even simply swim in contaminated water sources. If blue -green algae is ingested, it can cause severe liver damage.



Here are some solutions to help prevent the spread of blue-green algae. One of many things that will help is using **phosphate-free** detergents. Avoiding the use of fertilizers on lawns, especially fertilizers that contain phosphorus. Too much **phosphorus** can cause increased growth of algae and large aquatic plants, which can result in decreased levels of oxygen. Another solution is to check septic systems to ensure they do not leak into the water source. Septic systems also have chemicals in them that cause a growth in algae blooms, causing more blue-green algae. For one last solution, you can maintain vegetation along waterways. This helps because shoreline and overhanging vegetation provides a habitat that supports microbes, stream insects, and other food sources for fish and other aquatic life. This helps prevent algae blooms, which consume oxygen in the water. This shows that there are so many ways to help stop the spread of blue-green algae and to help prevent pollution, But we have to act

fast! Help stop pollution or the water will be as clear as mud.