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Public Health
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Possible Cyanobacteria Algae Blooms in Nashawannuck Pond and Lower Mill Pond

The Easthampton Health Department sent photographs of **both Nashawannuck Pond and Lower Mill Pond** to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) Toxicology Program for help in identifying a possible cyanobacteria algae bloom. After review, the MDPH Toxicology Program stated that the photos provided indicate the possible presence of cyanobacteria (algae) cells that may exceed the MDPH guidelines for recreational waterbodies in Massachusetts. The MDPH recommends posting public advisories at all access points of the ponds to notify residents that water should be avoided. The MDPH Toxicology Program will conduct follow up sampling at least one week from when identified, provided that the bloom is no longer evident. The MDPH requires two samples below the guideline level to be taken, one week apart, to recommend rescinding the advisory.

The following should be avoided:

- Swimming
- Fishing
- Kayaking/Boating

Algae blooms can be caused by:

- Warm weather
- Sunlight
- Excess nutrients in the water such as fertilizer and human/animal waste
- Storm water runoff
- Failing septic systems

Health concerns from harmful algae blooms vary depending on the type of exposure and the amounts:

- Contact with these algae can cause skin and eye irritation
- Ingesting small amounts can cause gastrointestinal symptoms. Ingesting large amounts of toxins may cause liver or neurological damage
- Inhaling water spray with algae in it can cause asthma-like symptoms

- Small children and pets are more susceptible to the effects of toxins than adults. Livestock and pet deaths from ingesting algal toxins have occurred. Dogs should be rinsed off immediately if they come into contact with an algae bloom

If you believe you or your pet came into contact with this algae, you should immediately wash yourself/pet with clean water and contact your primary care physician or veterinarian.

Signs will be posted at all access points at Nashawannuck Pond and Lower Mill Pond. The Easthampton Health Department is advising residents and their pets to avoid contact with this water until the advisory is lifted. The Easthampton Health Department will advise the public once the advisory is lifted.

The Easthampton Health Department reminds you “When in Doubt, Stay Out”

More information can be found at: <https://www.mass.gov/info-details/harmful-algae-blooms-in-fresh-water-bodies>