

Mission:

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



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Vision: To be the Healthiest State in the Nation

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For Immediate Release

TESTS CONFIRM BLUE-GREEN ALGAE RELEASING TOXINS NEAR THE PORT MAYACA LOCK & DAM

(Martin County, FL) – Last Friday, both the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) and the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD) collected samples from an area on the eastern bank of Lake Okeechobee near Port Mayaca. The SFWMD collected a sample for toxin analysis and DEP collected a sample for algal identification. Preliminary lab results of the water management district's single sampling event were received today confirming the presence of low levels of microcystin, the toxin.

The results indicated a microcystin level of 4.6 micrograms/liter at a ½ meter depth next to the lock. Adverse health impacts from short-term recreational exposures to levels under 10 microgram/liter are unlikely and considered a low-level risk according to the World Health Organization.

DEP and the SFWMD will continue to collect additional samples to supplement these initial results. The Florida Department of Health in Martin County is urging residents to avoid contact with visible algae in waters near the Port Mayaca Lock and Dam. Exposure to water containing algae toxins may cause nausea and vomiting if ingested and rash or hay fever symptoms if touched or inhaled.

Sunlight, temperatures, physical conditions, precipitation and the water's nutrients contribute to the formation of algae.

If you spot blue-green algae, contact the Department of Environmental Protection at 561-681-6600.

To report fish kills or abnormal fish behavior call Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission at 1-800-636-0511.

For more information about cyanobacteria/blue-green algae visit
<http://www.floridahealth.gov/environmental-health/aquatic-toxins/cyanobacteria.html>

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