



TULARE COUNTY
HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

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Caution Recommended for Residents Using Drinking Water Intakes That Draw Water Directly from the Kaweah River

The foothill community of Three Rivers provides an abundance of water recreation and resources to its community members as well as tourists throughout the year. It is an expansive and biologically diverse ecosystem, and as such it is dynamic in water quality.

Last week, reports of a potential harmful algae bloom (HAB) in recreational sites along the Kaweah River were received by the Tulare County Public Health Environmental Health Services Division (Tulare County) and the Central Valley Regional Water Quality Control Board (Regional Board).

Due to observations of potentially toxigenic algae in the river, **Tulare County Public Health is recommending that residents with drinking water intakes that draw water directly from the river not use their tap water for drinking, cooking, showering, or brushing teeth until more information is available. Residents receiving water from local water companies are not included or impacted by this health advisory.**

Local public health and state water quality experts are concerned there may be impacts to the health of those using water from the river if they are not effectively filtering out the toxins these algae produce. There is no easy fix if you are getting your water in this way; **boiling or putting chemicals in the water does not eliminate the toxins.**

Additional cautions: Please be cautious when bathing infants and young children, as they may swallow water. Do not drink or use water from any appliance connected to your water supply lines. This includes the water and ice dispensers in your refrigerator, freezer, and dishwasher.

Tulare County Public Health is partnering with Self-Help Enterprises to offer water testing services specific to cyanotoxins, for private domestic wells that draw water directly from the Kaweah River.

Residents with private wells who are concerned with their water quality can contact Self-Help Enterprises Water Quality Program at (559) 802-1285 or waterquality@selfhelpenterprises.org, or for more information visit: <https://www.selfhelpenterprises.org/programs/emergency-services/water-quality/>.

Freshwater Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) impact water quality and occur across many California counties. For current information on voluntary reporting, please refer to the HAB Incident Reports Map at the following link: https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/where/freshwater_events.html. If you are exposed to water that might be contaminated by an HAB, immediately wash with soap and water. Call Poison Control at 1-800-222-1222 for advice if you are having health problems you think are related to an HAB, and contact your medical provider.

Seek medical treatment immediately if you think that you, your pet, or your livestock has gotten sick after going in the water or incidentally ingesting the algae material. Be sure to alert the medical professional to the possible contact with cyanobacteria. If you suspect that your pet ingested something potentially toxic, please call your veterinarian or the ASPCA Animal Poison Control Center at 1-888-426-4435 immediately.

To report an algae bloom, do one of the following:

- Fill out the Bloom report form at: <https://mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/do/bloomreport.html>
- Email: CyanoHAB.reports@waterboards.ca.gov
- Call the Harmful Algal Blooms hotline: 1-844-729-6466 (toll free)



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- Contact the Tulare County Environmental Health Office at: (559) 624-7400

For more information about Harmful Algae Blooms, please visit:

- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) about algae blooms:
<https://www.mywaterquality.ca.gov/habs/what/index.html>
- California Department of Public Health:
<https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CCDPHP/DEODC/EHIB/EAS/Pages/HABs.aspx>
- Tulare County Environmental Health: <https://tularecountyeh.org/eh/>

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