**Blue Green Algae**

 Cyanobacteria (blue-green algae) is a microscopic bacteria found in lakes, streams, ponds and brackish water. As the climate warms, the presence of blue-green algae increases. The algae can produce toxins that affect people and animals who drink from the contaminated water.

 Blue-green algae colonize to form “blooms” that give the water a “pea soup” color. It may also look like blue or green paint on the surface of the water; and can have a foamy appearance. Algal concentrations are most abundant during periods of hot weather in mid to late summer months and are most likely to be found in nutrient-rich water. While most blue-green algae blooms do not produce toxins, it is not possible to determine the presence of toxins without testing. Thus, all blooms should be considered potentially toxic. Very small exposures, such a few mouthfuls of water, may result in fatal poisoning.

 Clinical signs of poisoning are dependent on the toxin involved, and can result in liver damage or failure. Signs include vomiting, diarrhea, blood in stool or black, tarry stool, weakness, pale mucous membranes, jaundice, seizures, disorientation, coma, and shock. Death generally follows within days as a result of liver failure. Aggressive, immediate treatment is necessary to help treat this quick-acting, potentially fatal poison.

 Unfortunately, there is no antidote for the toxins produced by blue-green algae. Immediate veterinary care is imperative. If you suspect your dog was exposed to blue-green algae, contact your veterinarian immediately.