



1333 Plaza Blvd, Suite E, Central Point, OR 97502 \* [www.mountainviewvet.net](http://www.mountainviewvet.net)

## **BLUE GREEN ALGAE TOXICOSIS**

Robert J. Landon, DVM -- 4/28/10

One of the beautiful things about southern Oregon is our abundant waterways. However, as temperatures warm with the onset of summer, danger could be lurking in those waters. Blue Green Algae Poisoning is a real threat and every year pets are poisoned and killed by the ingestion of this toxin.

Blue Green Algae (BGA) blooms occur in stagnant water with warm temperatures, sunlight, and high nutrient levels from fertilizer or animal waste runoff. Wind then moves the bloom to the shoreline where animals are exposed to and can ingest the BGA contaminated water. Blooms are typically light to dark green or reddish brown. Often, the county or state public health agencies will post a hazard notice near access points to contaminated waterways. Keep an eye out for these notices.

Ingestion of BGA toxin is associated with two syndromes, a neurotoxic syndrome and liver failure syndrome. Clinical signs of the neurotoxic syndrome are salivation, diarrhea, vomiting, difficulty breathing, tremors and twitching, weakness, seizures and death beginning at least 15 minutes after exposure. The liver failure syndrome begins at least 6 hours after exposure and is associated with vomiting, diarrhea, weakness and collapse.

Treatment for BGA toxicosis is centered on reducing further absorption and supportive care until the poison is metabolized and excreted. Success is directly related to amount ingested and the speed at which treatment is started. So if you see the algae on the muzzle or coat and your pet has been near stagnant water, don't delay. Call your veterinarian immediately and have your pet treated.

Summer is a great time in the Rogue Valley and there are plenty of things to do with your pets, but inspect waterways closely for signs of an algae bloom before the fun begins.