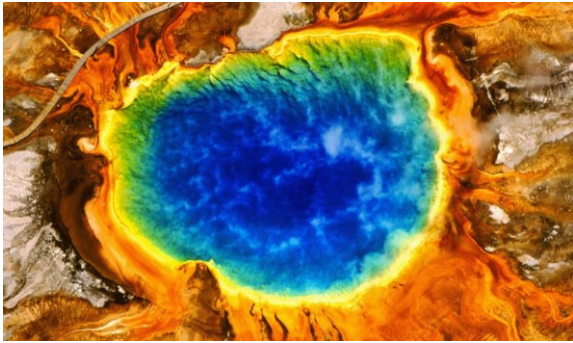
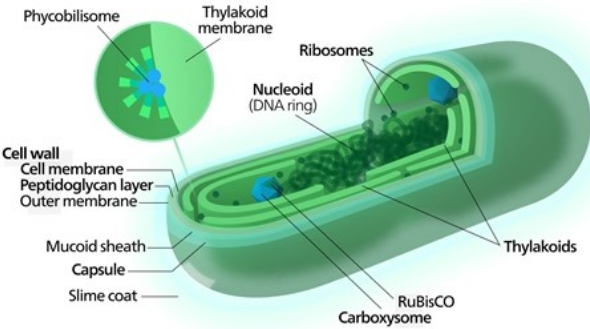


Cyanobacteria!



What are they?

Cyanobacteria are naturally found everywhere including fresh water throughout New England. They grow well in water that has high amounts of nutrients such as nitrogen and phosphorus. Under specific conditions, cyanobacteria can multiply quickly to form surface scums and dense populations known as blooms, especially during warm weather in late summer and early fall.

What does a bloom look like?

- May resemble thick pea soup or spilled paint on the water's surface
- May create a thick mat of foam along shoreline
- Generally green or blue-green in color, but can also be brown, purple, red, or white
- Made of small specks or blobs floating at or below the water's surface
- NOT stringy, bright grass-green, long strands
- NOT mustard yellow in color

Why should I be concerned?

General health affects caused by exposure to cyanobacteria cells (not toxins) include rashes, skin irritation, or allergy-like responses (e.g. runny nose, sore throat).

Some cyanobacteria produce harmful cyanotoxins. When swallowed in large amounts, they can lead to numb limbs, tingling fingers/toes, dizziness, severe stomach problems, or liver damage. Pets and livestock who drink water are especially susceptible to illness or even death.

It is not possible to tell if a bloom contains harmful toxins just by looking at it. If there is a bloom in process, stay out of the water!

Vocabulary

Cyanobacteria – bacteria that exhibit characteristics of algae and can create harmful toxins

Blue-green algae – an older less scientifically accurate term to refer to cyanobacteria

Bloom – congregation of algae on the surface of the water

HAB – Harmful algal bloom, can refer to cyanobacteria and/or red tides

Cyanobacteria

Few present (low risk)



NOT Cyanobacteria

Filamentous Green Algae (Hair-like)



Many present, no bloom (avoid algae)



Duckweed (Tiny plants)



Bloom in progress (stay away!)



Pollen (Mustard Yellow)

