

Cooperative Institute for  
Great Lakes Research

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*Great Lakes Science for Society*



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**Harmful algal blooms (HABs)** are dense colonies of simple aquatic organisms that can produce toxins. They're often caused by nutrient pollution from agricultural runoff, wastewater discharge, and other sources. HABs can threaten public health and contribute to economic losses that exceed \$2 billion annually in the United States.

***Did you know...***

- Great Lakes HABs can produce a toxin called microcystin, which is a liver toxin and skin irritant.
- High levels of microcystin were responsible for the Toledo water crisis in 2014 that left 500,000 people without water for 3 days and had an estimated \$65 million impact.

Learn more here



*Large harmful algal blooms, like this one in Lake Erie, can be seen from space!*