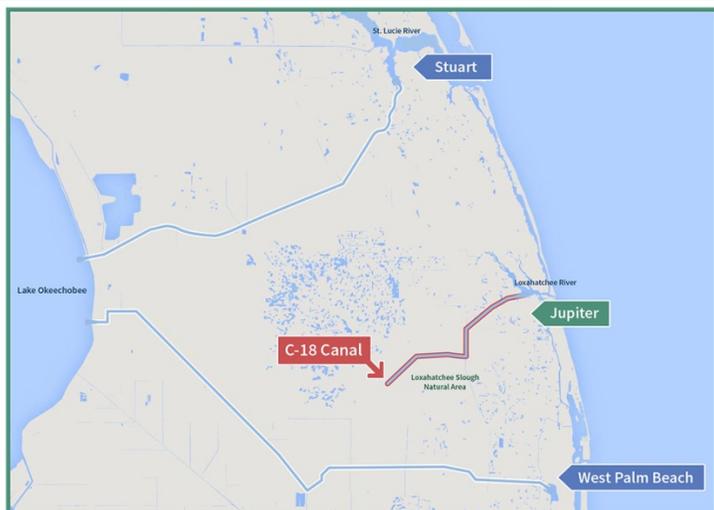


# Facts for Jupiter: Blue-green Algae



Unlike points north and south, Jupiter's waterways don't connect to Lake Okeechobee.

- Blue-green algae, also known as cyanobacteria, are found naturally in freshwater environments all over the world.
- Algae blooms can occur in both freshwater and brackish habitats, such as lakes, rivers and estuaries.
- Algae can multiply quickly in water bodies with high nutrient levels such as phosphorous or nitrogen.
- Water bodies that flow slowly are at greater risk for algae blooms. Other factors that contribute to blooms include warm weather, a lack of animal life that eat the algae, and stormwater runoff.
- Blooms may run days, weeks or months. Algae blooms that last more than a few months may harm the ecosystems, because they block sunlight and limit oxygen levels.

## Frequently Asked Questions:

**Q: How are Jupiter's waterways affected by the current blue-green algae bloom resulting from outflows from Lake Okeechobee?**

A: Different than watersheds to our north and south, Jupiter's waterways are not connected to Lake Okeechobee or any large agricultural areas which may produce nutrient-laden stormwater runoff. While it is possible for various factors to cause algae to bloom in Jupiter's waterways, the potential is substantially less than in areas to our north and south.

**Q: Does Jupiter get any of its drinking water supply from Lake Okeechobee?**

A: No. Jupiter uses two technologies – nanofiltration and reverse osmosis – to treat raw water from the surficial aquifer and the Floridan aquifer.

**Q: Who determines if an algae bloom poses a health risk?**

A: The Florida Department of Health (DOH) determines whether or not a bloom presents a public health risk. DOH will issue health advisories when it determines toxicity levels are above acceptable levels, and may post warning signs at beaches and waterways. The World Health Organization (WHO) also provides guidelines on acceptable levels of toxins. However, certain populations – children, the elderly, or people with compromised immune systems – may be at risk even when the general population is not.

**Q: Where are algae bloom samples tested, and what are they tested for?**

A: FDEP sends samples to their nationally-recognized lab in Tallahassee. They are tested to identify the type of algae present, and whether or not the types present are capable of producing toxins. If it is a potentially toxic algae type, then it is tested to determine if it is producing toxins, and at what level. Typical algae types tested for include microcystin, cylindrospermospin and anatoxin-a.

**Q: Can algae blooms be predicted?**

A: Where blooms occur, and how long they will last, is difficult to predict. Improving water quality by reducing nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorous).

**Q: Are all types of blue-green algae toxic or harmful? How can you tell if a particular algae bloom is dangerous?**

A: Some types produce toxins can contribute to environmental problems or affect public health. It is not know exactly what environmental conditions trigger the production of toxins. However, non-toxic blooms can also have an affect by depleting oxygen levels in the water by reducing the amount of light that reaches submerged plant life. Unfortunately, you can't tell whether or not algae is harmful simply by looking at it, which is why agencies like the Florida Department of Environmental Protection (FDEP) and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission (FWC) regularly sample water.

## What You Can Do:

### Report a problem

- If you see an algae bloom in a freshwater system, you can report it online at [www.reportalgalbloom.com](http://www.reportalgalbloom.com), or by calling 855-305-3903.
- To report fish that are dead or in poor physical condition, you can call the Fish Kill Hotline at 800-636-0511.
- To report symptoms or illnesses due to exposure contact the Florida Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.

### Stay informed

- FDEP posts sampling results, monitoring, and testing information on their website. Visit [www.dep.state.fl.us](http://www.dep.state.fl.us) and click on "Algal Blooms" on the right-hand side of the page. To receive email updates, visit the same website and click on "Sign-up for News and Info" on the left-hand side of the page.
- For information on the status of beaches in Northern Palm Beach County, call 561-624-0065. For information on state park beach status and closures, visit [www.floridastateparks.org](http://www.floridastateparks.org).