Lessons Learned from the Cyanotoxins in Drinking Water Event

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Children younger than 6 shouldn’t drink from tap in Salem, other cities

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Low levels of toxins caused by algae blooms in Detroit Lake have been discovered in Salem’s drinking water, prompting officials to warn parents not to give tap water to children under 6 years old.

People with compromised health and immune systems also are being told not to drink tap water.

Other affected cities include Turner and Stayton.

Bottled water should be used for drinking, making infant formula, making ice and preparing food and beverages for the affected groups, officials said.

“Children under the age of six, people with compromised immune systems, people receiving dialysis treatment, people with pre-existing liver conditions, pets, pregnant women or nursing mothers, or other sensitive populations should follow this advisory,” a news release states.

Salem-Keizer Public Schools will offer bottled water for students who are pre-K through first grade, district officials said.

David Faarwarz, a public health toxicologist with the Oregon Health Authority, said there really isn’t anything to be concerned about the water.

Boiling the water doesn’t work; nor does the filter that attaches to faucets. Fararwarz said it’s best for children and others in vulnerable populations to not drink the water until the advisory is lifted.

What are cyanotoxins?

A common bacteria called cyanobac-
Dolichospermum lemmermannii

May 21st 2018 at Blowout creek
Overview of Microcystin Data

Figure 2.2  Microcystin Concentrations at the GIWTF Intake and Aldersgate (POE)
Overview of Cylindrospermopsin Data
Bottled Water

- Initially distributed at sites
- Dumping water
- Went to gallon jugs
- Finally stopped

Home Delivery

- **Vulnerable populations**
  - Called hotline
  - Need evaluated
  - Water was also available at Marion/Polk County Food Share
BYOC

- Bring your own container.
- Bags were too small.
- Worked well – except!
Dispensing water

- County Health concerns
- Modified dispensing systems
- Staff fill containers
Questions?