

VareseNews

It is official: beware of algae

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Beware of algae in the Lake of Varese, their toxins are bad: this is the sense of the communication from the **ASL of Varese** published yesterday on the website of the healthcare association, after they analysed the commonly known "red algae". As pointed out by our readers, these "algae" are actually a cyanobacteria called **Planktothrix rubescens** and, according to the healthcare communication, are "capable of producing toxins that are harmful to humans and animals" with different effects, depending on the concentration and type of exposure: "The toxins can have different effects on human health (dermatitis, eye and respiratory tracts irritation, gastrointestinal events, such as nausea, vomiting and diarrhoea, breathing difficulties, headache, fever, etc.); in particular, the risk may be related to direct contact, inhalation of aerosolised material, inadvertent ingestion of contaminated water or consumption of fish in which the toxin has accumulated".

After researching the seaweed which has been found in the Lake of Varese, the Public Health Laboratory of ASL has reported the presence of algal toxins in the tested water samples, with a value above 5 micrograms per litre: with the consequence that ASL "confirms the potential dangerousness, from a health point of view, of the phenomenon". ASL, in their note, remembers "**the necessity of avoiding direct and prolonged contacts with lake water** in areas with visible algal 'blossoms', also if accompanied by foam and as an **precaution has banned the consumption of fish and shellfish**, in case someone finds a strange reddish colouring in the waters."

Information which ASL suggests to spread to the municipality administrations bordering the Lake of Varese and to the provincial administrations. But it seems that it has not arrived at the destinations: or at least, according to a letter from an angler, now in the newsroom: "It would be better to inform people near the lake about the cursed seaweed, because not everyone knows that they shouldn't touch the water or the foam as I know that is quite dangerous for us. In my town, I only saw three leaflets (quite small and located in places difficult to read) even on the municipal boards. It would be good to put at least one in the post office."

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