

Protect Your Piece of Paradise

CLEAN
WATER
TIPS

LET'S PROTECT OUR WATERWAYS TOGETHER

Many of the things we love about Florida—family outings to the beach, a day on the water, kayaking and fishing, not to mention quality of life, our health, the economy, and our property values—all depend on [clean water](#).

As Florida continues to grow at a record-setting pace, we need to be mindful of our choices and their impacts on water quality. So let's take a few steps to ensure that we protect our paradise and our health:

AT HOME

- Avoid fertilizer when possible and definitely during the wet season when rains wash it straight into our waterways. Fertilizer is a major source of phosphorous and nitrogen, the nutrients that fuel Harmful Algae Blooms. Check with your city and county ordinances for their specific fertilizer guidelines.
- Consider landscaping choices that use Florida-friendly plants, which need little or no fertilizer and irrigation. They are just as pretty as exotics, and will save you money!



Cyanobacteria blooms can be toxic and are caused by high nutrient levels in stormwater runoff.

- Don't irrigate during the day when evaporation makes it least effective and wastes water and money. Also ensure your sprinklers aren't spraying into roadways or directly into canals to increase water use efficiency and reduce nutrients.
- If you have waterfront property, consider creating a 10 or 15 foot setback with native plants that require no fertilizer, irrigation or mowing. Vegetation buffers absorb nutrients that would otherwise end up in our waterways.
- Consider rain barrels and minimizing the amount of hardscape on your property. This gives stormwater a better chance to percolate into the ground to be filtered naturally.
- If you have a septic tank or drain field, have it regularly maintained and inspected.
- Bag pet waste and dispose of it in the garbage.
- Try a plant-based diet once a week. Industrial meat production uses huge amounts of water and fertilizer. Agriculture is the largest source of nutrients in almost every watershed in Florida.



Fighting for swimmable, fishable, drinkable water.
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**CLEAN
WATER
TIPS**
CONTINUED

These tips should help protect your health and wellbeing and promote your continued enjoyment of our beautiful state. We all have a right to clean water. It is fundamental to our way of life in Florida.

FOR YOUR HEALTH

- Harmful Algae Blooms such as Red Tide and Blue Green Algae can produce toxins harmful to human health. If there is an active Red Tide or Blue Green Algae bloom, avoid it.
- Stay as far away from blooms as possible, as research suggests toxins can become airborne.
- Do not drink, swim, wade, paddle, water ski or boat in waters where there are active blooms.
- If you have contact with algae blooms, wash your skin and clothing with soap and water.
- Do not cook or clean dishes with water contaminated by algae blooms. Boiling water will not eliminate the toxins.
- Keep pets away from the area. Waters with active algae blooms are not safe for animals. Pets and livestock should have a different source of water when algae blooms are present.
- Consult the latest information and advisories from the Florida Dept. of Health (FDOH) before consuming fish caught in state waters.
- Do not eat shellfish from waters containing algae blooms.

IN YOUR COMMUNITY

- Educate yourself and become a VOICE for clean water.
- Become active. Attend town halls, city, and county meetings to have your voice heard.
- Don't litter. Have the family participate in fun and educational cleanups of our beaches and waterways.
- Share these tips with your HOA or community leaders.
- Support environmental organizations battling to solve Florida's water quality issues.
- Vote Water. Elect officials who demonstrate that clean water is a top priority.



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Visit our website for more information and links to state resources on red tide status, algal blooms, beach reports and other important advisories.



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