

# ANIMAL HEALTH ALERT

Veterinary Public Health | (213) 288-7060 | [vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov) | <http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/>



## Animal Health Update: Unexplained illness affecting multiple dogs in the Venice Canals area 8.8.2025

### Key Points:

- The Veterinary Public Health Program (VPH) is continuing to investigate reports of unexplained acute onset severe illness in multiple dogs in the Venice Canals neighborhood.
- Testing of the canal water, algae and scum by the California Water Boards has detected the presence of algal toxins: microcystins, anatoxin-a and cylindrospermopsin. No definitive link between these algal toxins and the dog illnesses has been established at this time and the investigation is ongoing.
- The City of Los Angeles will post signage around affected canal areas warning residents and visitors of the potential risk of algal toxins and advising people and pets to stay out of the canals and away from algae, scum, or any debris near the water.
- Veterinarians should [REPORT suspected cases](#) to VPH at [vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov), and call: 213-288-7060 (Mon-Fri, 8am-5pm); additional testing or necropsy may be available.

Dear Veterinary Colleagues,

The Veterinary Public Health Program (VPH) of the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC-DPH) is continuing to investigate reports of unexplained acute onset severe illness in multiple dogs in the Venice Canals neighborhood. As of today, there have been 26 canine cases reported, including five canine deaths, with the most recent case presenting with clinical signs on July 30, 2025. The most commonly reported symptoms in affected dogs include sudden and severe lethargy and weakness, lack of coordination, vomiting, tremors, and seizures. The source of the illnesses remains undetermined at this time.

Experts from multiple programs within the LAC-DPH, as well as from other City, State and County agencies, have been consulted and are actively participating in this ongoing investigation. All possible sources for these illnesses are being considered, including exposure to any pesticides, harmful organisms, or environmental hazards connected to the Venice Canals area.

### **Preliminary Environmental Findings**

As part of the investigation, the California Water Boards tested the canal water, algae and scum. Results detected the presence of algal toxins: microcystins, anatoxin-a and cylindrospermopsin. The health effects of the toxins produced by algae vary by route of exposure. Clinical signs in animals can include diarrhea, vomiting, convulsions, and death. Please see California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA)'s [Veterinarian's Reference](#) for additional information on these toxins.

A definitive link between these algal toxins and the dog illnesses is not confirmed. Out of an abundance of caution, the City of Los Angeles will post signage around affected canal areas warning residents and visitors of the potential health and safety risks associated with toxins produced by algae to both people and pets.

### **Venice Canal Advisory and Safety Guidance**

Until further notice, pet owners are strongly advised to:

- Prevent pets from swimming in the canals
- Keep pets away from scum, foam, and cloudy or discolored water
- Do not allow pets to enter or drink the canal water
- Do not allow pets to ingest, touch, or sniff algae, scum, or any debris near the canal water

### **Guidance for veterinary professionals and pet owners remains unchanged**

**For Pet Owners:** *The following recommendations should be communicated to pet owners*

- Closely supervise pets when outdoors
- Keep dogs leashed on walks
- Prevent pets from sniffing or eating anything off the ground, especially on walks or in public spaces

- Keep pets out of the canals, and prevent them from drinking standing water
- Do not allow dogs to share water bowls
- Pet owners who suspect their pet is ill should seek immediate veterinary care
- Post this [informational flyer](#) at your facility and/or email to pet owners

**For Veterinary Professionals:** *Collect a detailed history when seeing suspect cases, including:*

- Recent travel history and location of walking routes and public areas visited
- Any dietary indiscretion, especially on walks or in public access spaces
- Potential exposure to pesticides, rodenticides or snail/slug bait
- Exposures to canals, ingestion of standing water or from communal water bowls

**REPORT** all suspected cases to VPH

- Using the [Animal Disease Reporting Form](#) which can be submitted via email to [vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov) and call 213-288-7060 (Monday—Friday, 8 AM—5 PM) to discuss case; VPH may be able to assist with additional testing.
- Suspect cases include patients with history of visiting the Venice Canals area within the last two months, and presenting acutely with the clinical signs listed above that cannot be attributed to another known cause.

*Veterinary Public Health extends sincere condolences to the families and pet owners of the dogs that passed or that were affected. We sincerely appreciate the time and efforts from pet owners and the Venice Canals community who have provided information.*

**Select Resources:**

- State of California – Water Quality Monitoring Council - [Harmful Algal Blooms \(HABs\) Fact Sheet for Veterinarians](#)
- State of California – Water Quality Monitoring Council –[FAQs for Pets, Livestock & Harmful Algal Blooms \(HABs\)](#)
- California Office of Environmental Health Hazard Assessment (OEHHA) – [Marine Harmful Algal Bloom \(HAB\)-Related Illness Tracking](#)

- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – [Harmful Algal Bloom \(HAB\)-Associated Illness](#)
- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) – [Animal Safety Alert – Cyanobacterial blooms](#)

Sincerely,

**Veterinary Public Health**

Los Angeles County Department of Public Health

(213) 288-7060

[vet@ph.lacounty.gov](mailto:vet@ph.lacounty.gov)

<http://publichealth.lacounty.gov/vet/>

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