

Phosphorus Reduction in Lake County

Learn more!



STORMWATER MANAGEMENT COMMISSION



LakeCounty
Health Department and
Community Health Center

Clean and healthy water
starts with you!

What is phosphorus?

Phosphorus is a naturally occurring element that is important for plant growth. However, **too much** phosphorus can **wreak havoc** on aquatic systems. **Human activities** add a substantial amount of phosphorus to streams and lakes. Even if phosphorus is not directly added to a lake or stream, it is **carried into the waterbody** via stormwater runoff.



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Excess phosphorus in streams and lakes can have many negative consequences.

Algal Blooms: Phosphorus can cause rapid algal growth. While algae is an important part of aquatic ecosystems, excess algae can reduce waterbody aesthetics and increase flood risks by inhibiting drainage of stormwater runoff.

Fish Kills/Die-Offs: The dissolved oxygen in a body of water is used up as algae die and decay. If a fish population does not have access to enough dissolved oxygen, many fish can die.

Human and Pet Health: Some algae can produce harmful toxins.

Invasives: Phosphorus can increase the growth of invasive aquatic plants, which can restrict recreational activities, clog drainage pipes, and harm native plants and fish.



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Follow these best practices:

- Keep **yard waste** (such as grass and leaves) **out** of gutters, streets, ditches, and streambanks.
- Pick up **pet waste promptly**.
- Use **native plants** in your landscaping to **filter** stormwater runoff and **minimize erosion**.
- Wash your car at a **commercial facility** instead of your driveway.
- **Test your soil** to assess the amount and type of fertilizer it needs (if any); only use the **minimum amount** of fertilizer necessary.
- **Pump** septic tanks every **2-3 years**. **Inspect** aerobic treatment units at least **2 times per year**.
- Only apply fertilizer **once a year**. Early fall is the best time. Avoid applying fertilizer before heavy rain as it can **wash away**.



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Don't forget to talk to your family, friends, and community members about adopting sustainable practices!



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Learn more at <https://www.lakecountyiil.gov/3548>

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