

HERBICIDES AGAINST HYDRILLA: ENDOTHALL AND ITS HEALTH EFFECTS

What is Endothall?

Endothall is a selective contact herbicide that is being applied to the Cayuga Inlet in the continued effort to eradicate Hydrilla. Endothall kills the growing green vegetation that it contacts in the water. Hydrilla is much more sensitive to the effects of endothall than most native plants.

The application of the chemical occurs below the surface of the water and is conducted by licensed herbicide applicators over 36 hours. The chemical degrades naturally by bacterial action in the water, and has a half-life ranging from 5 to 8 days.

Health Impacts

Drinking water quality is closely monitored

- Endothall is applied to Cayuga Inlet at a concentration rate of 3 ppm (parts per million). Water may not be used as drinking water until the concentration is below the New York State Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL) of 0.05 ppm or 50 ppb (parts per billion). Endothall is expected to be below the MCL in the application areas within 10-14 days due to dispersion, dilution and degradation.
- The Bolton Point Water Treatment Plant is located 3 miles away from the herbicide application area. Water samples are collected at the water supply intake until at least 14 days following the endothall application. Results will be posted at StopHydrilla.org and tompkins-co.org/health.
- While the MCL is not expected to be exceeded at Bolton Point, it will be exceeded at other locations in the inlet and possibly in Cayuga Lake. Water taken directly from the lake should never be used for drinking.
- Animal consumption of the treated water is prohibited for 14 days.

Swimming is prohibited until one day after the endothall application

- Endothall is poorly absorbed through the skin. Minor skin and eye irritations have been reported in people who are regularly exposed to concentrated levels of endothall in the course of their work, but no effects have been observed as a result of occasional exposure.

Fishing is unrestricted

- There are no restrictions on catching and eating fish.
- Endothall does not accumulate in animal tissue. Fish and livestock that consume water treated with endothall rapidly excrete the chemical.

Use of lake water for irrigation restricted

- Because endothall is an herbicide, do not use lake water for irrigation or spraying of grass or agricultural crops until at least 7 days after the application.

FOR MORE INFORMATION: Visit StopHydrilla.org or tompkins-co.org/health for more information including details about endothall, water quality monitoring results, updates, events, ways to get involved or to report a suspected new population of hydrilla outside of Cayuga Inlet.