



## Cayuga County Health Department Hydrilla – Frequently Asked Questions Regarding Fluridone



### **Health and safety questions for Aurora residents and visitors regarding the application of fluridone to treat Hydrilla**

Fluridone is an herbicide primarily used to control underwater plants including the rapidly growing, invasive plant species Hydrilla. Fluridone is taken up by the plant's roots and disrupts the plant's ability to use light during its photosynthesis process.

Fluridone will be used to treat the Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake, near the Village of Aurora, in a slow release pellet form (trade name Sonar H4C) by a New York State licensed professional applicator. The map of the treatment area can be found on the "Eradication Project in Aurora" webpage.

According to information provided by the applicator, the pellets will be applied below the water surface at an initial treatment concentration of 20 parts per billion (ppb) or less. Due to the timed release rate of the fluridone, the applicator will aim to maintain a fluridone concentration in the water near the plants' roots of less than 5 ppb for about 60 days, starting in late June 2018.

The intake for the water treatment plant that serves the Village of Aurora and Wells College is near the fluridone treatment area, and there is the potential that low levels of the fluridone would be in the public drinking water.

In addition, the Wells College bathing beach is in the treatment area.

**1. Does the Sonar H4C label have restrictions on swimming and water use during treatment?**

There are no restrictions on drinking, fishing, swimming, boating, or domestic use of fluridone-treated water at the concentrations that will be applied. There may be some restrictions on watering certain plants. See question # 5 below.

**2. Will the fluridone level in the drinking water and bathing beach be monitored?**

Drinking water served to the Village of Aurora and Wells College comes from Cayuga Lake. The drinking water and the water in the Wells College bathing beach will be monitored for fluridone during and after treatment.

Results of the water sampling will be posted regularly on the Cayuga County Health Department website at the following link:

<http://www.cayugacounty.us/Community/Health/Environmental-Health/Hydrilla>

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[www.cayugacounty.us/health](http://www.cayugacounty.us/health)

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**3. How can I find out when the fluridone is being applied?**

The dates of application will be posted on the Cayuga County Health Department website at the following link:  
<http://www.cayugacounty.us/Community/Health/Environmental-Health/Hydrilla>

**4. Are health impacts expected from drinking the water served to the Village and Wells College during the treatment period?**

Drinking water served to the Village of Aurora and Wells College comes from Cayuga Lake. The Cayuga County Health Department does not expect that there would be any health impacts from drinking the municipal water with low levels of fluridone during the treatment of hydrilla.

It is expected that the lake water concentration of fluridone would be less than 5 ppb during the hydrilla treatment. This level is far below the drinking water standard, or Maximum Contaminant Level (MCL), of 50 ppb for fluridone set by the New York State Department of Health and significantly below the Human Health Benchmark for Pesticides of 960 ppb set by the United States Environmental Protection Agency. The drinking water will be monitored by the Cayuga County Health Department.

**5. If I draw my water directly from the lake, will my water be safe to drink during the application of fluridone?**

Regardless of whether fluridone is applied to areas of Cayuga Lake, the New York State Department of Health advises that people should never drink untreated surface water (water that is drawn from the lake, at any depth) under any circumstances. Untreated surface water might contain bacteria, parasites, viruses, and harmful algal blooms. These contaminants can cause symptoms such as diarrhea, nausea, and vomiting. Young children, pregnant women, older adults and people with health issues are at higher risk from symptoms associated with these contaminants.

**6. Can the treated water be used to water my lawn, flowers, garden plants, and crops?**

According to the Special Local Needs Label for Sonar 4HC accepted by the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, there are no restrictions to watering established turf as long as the concentration of fluridone in the water is less than 10 ppb. It is expected that the fluridone would not exceed 5 ppb during the treatment period.

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The water that contains fluridone should not be used for other plants more sensitive to fluridone, such as greenhouse and nursery plants, newly seeded lawns and some vegetable plants. For more information regarding irrigation please contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation – Pesticide Division at 1-800-388-8244 ext. 232.

**7. Can pellets be moved by wave and water action away from the treatment area and become more concentrated in areas near the bathing beach?**

According to the firm who has experience in applying fluridone for Hydrilla control, the movement of pellets has not occurred in other applications.

**8. What are the breakdown products of fluridone? Are they harmful?**

A potential breakdown product of fluridone is n-methyl formamide (NMF). This chemical has been found in studies conducted in a laboratory setting, but has never been found under natural conditions. According to available scientific literature, even if NMF is formed during use in Aurora, the levels would be so low as to not have an impact on health.

**9. How long is the fluridone treatment period?**

The treatment period is expected to last ten weeks, beginning in late June 2018. Exact dates will be provided once the treatment plan is completed. Treatment will continue during the summer months at this site for a number of years to fully ensure Hydrilla eradication.

**10. Where can I find out more about fluridone?**

For in-depth information and scientific studies about fluridone and the environment, please see the following links:

- [http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands\\_forests\\_pdf/seraflurid.pdf](http://www.dec.ny.gov/docs/lands_forests_pdf/seraflurid.pdf)
- <https://www.epa.gov/dwstandardsregulations/human-health-benchmarks-pesticides-drinking-water>
- <http://www.tompkinscountyny.gov/health/eh/water/hydrilla>
- <http://cctompkins.org/environment/invasive-nuisance-species/aquatic-invasives/hydrilla>

For questions regarding Hydrilla in Cayuga Lake:

- Please contact the Finger Lakes Partnership for Regional Invasive Species Management (FL-PRISM) at 315-781-4385 <http://fingerlakesinvasives.org/>

For questions regarding the pesticide application:

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- Please contact the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Region 7 Pesticide Office at 315-426-7400

For questions regarding public health:

- Please contact the Cayuga County Health Department at 315-253-1560  
<http://www.cayugacounty.us/health>

To find out how you, your family, community group or school can help look for and report Hydrilla around Cayuga Lake:

- Please contact the Cayuga Lake Watershed Network 607-319-0475 or email [steward@cayugalake.org](mailto:steward@cayugalake.org)
- More information is available at: <http://www.cayugalake.org/hydrilla-resources.html>

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