



The Truth About Shark Products

Sharks are being decimated around the globe to meet the demand for shark products. Yet, the average consumer is not even aware of his or her participation in this destructive market. While the trade of fins is the biggest offender, the demand for shark meat is a close second. Because of these exploding markets, other random industries (cosmetics, health supplements, leather products and exotic meats) are being created to make a profit from sharks. Most of them are either pointless, ineffective or unhealthy, while others are purposely disguised with names that hide the fact that they are made from shark.

-Sharks have survived for 450 million years, that's 5 mass extinction events, and yet the human population is killing them off in a matter of years.

-Healthy shark populations are directly correlated to the health of our oceans. They are the white blood cells of the sea. They keep the ocean clean and keep disease from spreading by removing the sick, dead or dying. As apex predators, they maintain healthy fish populations by removing weak animals and keeping the strongest of a species to thrive.

-Sharks are slow to reach sexual maturity, reproduce infrequently and only have a couple pups at a time. They reproduce more like mammals and their populations do not bounce back easily. Most fish in commercial fishing industries have very high reproductive rates. They can have millions of eggs per year. They have adapted over time to survive predators. Sharks on the other hand have had very few predators for millions of years, until recently when we came around.

-Shark fin and meat markets have decimated shark populations by 90% in the last 20 years. Fins from 26-73 million sharks end up in the shark fin trade.

-More often than not, when shark is included in a product the ingredient is disguised through misleading names (such as "squalene" in cosmetics or "flake" in fish and chips dishes). It is important to mention that 30% of the seafood you eat is mislabeled. Often, shark is passed off for other white fish.

-It is scientifically proven that shark meat, in most cases, contains extremely high levels of Mercury, PCBs, Urea and other toxic pollutants.

-There is a false rumor that sharks do not get cancer. Some believe that taking shark cartilage supplements will prevent human cancer in humans. The American Cancer Association, the FDA and countless other organizations strongly dispute this claim.

-There is also no scientific evidence that shark liver oil is cancer fighting or positive for your health.

All of this false advertising leads to unsuspecting consumers unintentionally buying products made from sharks. There are many alternatives! Plant based products are usually healthier and just as effective. And in the case of meat, we really need to ask ourselves if it is necessary to eat an endangered species. We are hopeful that with this knowledge, you will start conversations and the right choices will come easily to you.