Shark Cartilage

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Shark Cartilage  
What is it?  
Shark cartilage is the tissue that provides support for fins in sharks (Squalus acanthias). It mainly comes from sharks caught in the Pacific Ocean.   
  
Shark cartilage became a popular medicine in the 1970s. But its popularity led to a decline in shark numbers. It was previously suggested that sharks don't get cancer, so consuming their cartilage might help prevent cancer in humans. But it is now clear that sharks do get cancer, and research hasn't shown benefits for cancer in humans.  
  
People use shark cartilage for cancer, scaly itchy skin (psoriasis), osteoarthritis, and many other conditions, but there is no good scientific evidence supporting these uses.  
   
Don't confuse shark cartilage with bovine cartilage, or with chondroitin, which can be sourced from shark cartilage.  
  
  
  
How effective is it?  
Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database rates effectiveness based on scientific evidence according to the following scale: Effective, Likely Effective, Possibly Effective, Possibly Ineffective, Likely Ineffective, Ineffective, and Insufficient Evidence to Rate.The effectiveness ratings for SHARK CARTILAGE are as follows:Likely ineffective for...Cancer. Taking shark cartilage by mouth does not benefit people with advanced, previously treated cancers, including breast, colon, lung, prostate, and brain cancer.   
  
There is interest in using shark cartilage for a number of other purposes, but there isn't enough reliable information to say whether it might be helpful.  
  
  
Is it safe?  
When taken by mouth: Shark cartilage is possibly safe when used for up to 40 months. It can cause a bad taste in the mouth, nausea, vomiting, stomach upset, and constipation.  
When applied to the skin: Shark cartilage is possibly safe when used for up to 8 weeks.  
  
Special precautions & warnings:  
Pregnancy and breast-feeding: There isn't enough reliable information to know if shark cartilage is safe to use when pregnant or breast-feeding. Stay on the safe side and avoid use.  
"Autoimmune diseases" such as multiple sclerosis (MS), lupus (systemic lupus erythematosus, SLE), rheumatoid arthritis (RA), or other conditions: Shark cartilage might cause the immune system to become more active. This could increase the symptoms of autoimmune diseases. If you have one of these conditions, it's best to avoid using shark cartilage.  
High calcium levels (hypercalcemia): Shark cartilage contains calcium and might increase calcium levels. Do not use shark cartilage if you already have high calcium levels.  
  
  
Are there interactions with medications?  
ModerateBe cautious with this combination.Medications that decrease the immune system (Immunosuppressants)Shark cartilage can increase the activity of the immune system. Some medications, such as those used after a transplant, decrease the activity of the immune system. Taking shark cartilage along with these medications might decrease the effects of these medications.  
  
  
Are there interactions with herbs and supplements?  
CalciumShark cartilage contains calcium and might raise calcium levels. Using it along with calcium supplements might make calcium levels too high.  
  
  
Are there interactions with foods?  
Acidic fruit juices such as orange, apple, grape, or tomato, can lower the strength of shark cartilage. If shark cartilage is added to a fruit juice to improve flavor, it should be consumed right away.  
  
  
How is it typically used?  
There isn't enough reliable information to know what an appropriate dose of shark cartilage might be. Keep in mind that natural products are not always necessarily safe and dosages can be important. Be sure to follow relevant directions on product labels and consult a healthcare professional before using.  
  
  
Other names  
AE-941, Cartilage de Requin, Cartilage de Requin du Pacifique, Cartilago de Tiburon, Collag ne Marin, Extrait de Cartilage de Requin, Liquide de Cartilage Marin, Marine Collagen, Marine Liquid Cartilage, MSI-1256F, Neovastat, Pacific Shark Cartilage, Poudre de Cartilage de Requin, Shark Cartilage Powder, Shark Cartilage Extract, Sphyrna lewini, Squalus acanthias.  
  
  
Methodology  
  
 To learn more about how this article was written, please see the Natural Medicines Comprehensive Database methodology.   
   
  
  
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