

Shark Cartilage

As a cancer researcher myself, I have read a plethora of information and clinical studies regarding this supplement. Though not an herb, shark cartilage is often requested and rumored as a chemopreventive and treatment for cancer, as well as a variety of vascular ailments. Recent studies have defused the pandemonium surrounding this supplement's potential. It was thought originally that "sharks do not get cancer" and reported as such by a number of doctors. However, it has recently been shown that sharks do, in fact, get cancer. The mystery is not hard to unshroud with concern to why sharks, though they are able to and do develop cancer, are less likely to express the affliction. The answer lies not within a "magic bullet" compound contained in cartilage (though if any, the compound squalamine has the best indications for chemo-treatment, possessing antibiotic and antiprotozoal properties), but in the very definition of cartilage itself. Cartilage is naturally starving a vascular supply equivocal or even comparable to those of bone structure or normal muscular composition with regard to arterial and venous transport in all species of animals (including humans) whose frames are not comprised of cartilage. It is this vascular supply that "feeds" cancer cells, allows for rapid metastases, and enables their survival. Shark's cartilaginous structure is, therefore, predisposed to be chemopreventive itself due to its lack of ability to develop cancer based on biological prerequisites for the disease, and not chemopreventive compounds hidden within the cartilage composition. It should also be noted that research in bovine cartilage has revealed potential supplements in the form of collagen derivatives that often outscore their shark counterparts in consistency and efficacy.

General References:

1. Miller DR, Granick JL, Stark JJ, Anderson GT. Phase I/II trial of the safety and efficacy of shark cartilage in the treatment of advanced cancers. *Journal of Clinical Oncology*. 1997;16(11):3649-3655.
2. Romano CF, Lipton A, Harvey HA, Simmonds MA, Romano PJ, Imboden SL. A phase II study of Catix-S in solid tumors. *Journal of Biological Response Modifiers*. 1985;4:585-9.
3. Leitner SP, Rothkopf MM, Haverstick L, Rodman DD, Michaelson RA. Two phase II studies of oral dry shark cartilage powder (SCP) in patients (pts) with either metastatic breast or prostate cancer refractory to standard treatment. *American Society of Clinical Oncolog*. 1998.