

SHARK FIN SOUP

RISK TO HUMAN HEALTH

Shark fin soup is traditionally served at special occasions as a symbol of luxury and hospitality. Shark fins themselves are tasteless and offer little nutritional value. They contain high levels of methylmercury and other dangerous toxins that can be fatal in large quantities. Over time, even at relatively small doses they can cause significant health problems for consumers—including damage to the brain, heart, kidneys, lungs, and immune system. These effects are especially pronounced in unborn babies and young children.

Mercury from human sources (primarily the burning of fossil fuels) enters the ocean and is converted to methylmercury, a powerful neurotoxin. Methylmercury is then ingested by living organisms. At each successive level in the food chain, the methylmercury content in the flesh of the animal is concentrated. Fish near the top of the food chain, such as sharks and swordfish, contain the highest concentrations of this neurotoxin.

In addition, a Florida study indicated that neurotoxin β -N-methylamino-L-alanine (BMAA) was found in the fins of all shark species examined. BMAA has been associated with the development of Alzheimer's disease and other neurodegenerative problems.



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Consuming shark fin products is bad for your health. It is also bad for the environment: Demand for shark fin soup is driving sharks to extinction and destabilizing marine ecosystems.



Jan Sochor

YOU CAN PROTECT YOUR HEALTH AND HELP SHARKS BY CHOOSING NOT TO CONSUME SHARK FIN SOUP

Thank you for your time! Learn more about our efforts to protect sharks at awionline.org.

Questions? Please contact Susan Millward of the Animal Welfare Institute at (202) 446-2123 for more information.

