



## Doctors Give Botox to a Shark

Charles E. Crutchfield III, MD of Crutchfield Dermatology, and the veterinary care staff at the Minnesota Zoo, recently administered Botox to a shark in need.

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Charles E. Crutchfield III, MD, and Crutchfield Dermatology (Eagan, Minnesota) recently assisted the veterinary staff with a unique patient, Haps, a sand tiger shark, to help with his scoliosis (abnormal curvature of the spine) at the Minnesota Zoo (Apple Valley, MN). Sharks in the wild, as well as in human care, can develop scoliosis. Some types of scoliosis are caused by an abnormal and persistent contraction of muscles along just one side of the spine that causes the spine to be curved. Veterinary and animal care professionals are investigating possible contributing factors for this type of scoliosis, but they have not yet identified an apparent cause for the condition. Veterinarians in Australia reported that Botox has the potential to correct the spinal curvature in sharks.

Earlier this month Dr. Crutchfield III (also a Clinical Professor of Dermatology at the University of Minnesota Medical School) worked with the Minnesota Zoo's veterinary staff to administer Botox to Haps the shark. They are happy to report that there is an improvement in the spine curvature of Haps, the shark. The case of scoliosis for Haps remains challenging. The animal care team continues to support Haps and work to maintain the best quality of life for him.

"I was delighted and optimistic when the care staff at the Minnesota Zoo asked if I would help administer Botox to 'Haps' the shark to help improve his condition of scoliosis. Over the past 18 years, I've administered almost a million units of Botox to humans, but this was the very first shark. In fact, by all accounts, Haps was the very first shark ever treated with Botox in the United States. I was extraordinarily impressed with the dedication and care of the veterinary and support staff at the Minnesota Zoo. They treat every animal entrusted to their care just like family. It is quite remarkable. Dr. Rachel Thompson, the Minnesota Zoo's veterinarian, and I planned out the procedure, and I assisted her in the administration of Botox to the stiffened muscles along his spine. Dr. Thompson is a top-flite veterinarian and, as I discovered, a natural at injecting botox. I am happy to report that after just a couple of weeks, Haps is doing better, and that warms my heart," said Dr. Crutchfield.

Both the Minnesota Zoo's Veterinary staff and Dr. Crutchfield recognize that there is still a lot to learn about sharks. They are honored to be contributing research to the shark community and providing exceptional care to and attempting to improve the quality of life for Haps the shark by going well 'above and beyond the call of duty.'

About Charles E. Crutchfield III, MD:

Charles E. Crutchfield III, M.D. is a graduate of the Mayo Clinic Medical School and a Clinical Professor of Dermatology at the University of Minnesota Medical School. He currently is the Medical Director of Crutchfield Dermatology in Eagan, (serving the greater Minneapolis-St. Paul area), Minnesota. Dr. Crutchfield is an annual selection of the "Top Doctors" issue of Mpls. St. Paul magazine and the "Top Doctors for Women" issues of Minnesota Monthly Magazine. Dr. Crutchfield is the co-author of a children's book on sun protection and dermatology textbook. He is a member of the AQA National Medical Honor Society, an expert consultant for WebMD and CNN, and a recipient of the Karis Humanitarian Award from the Mayo Clinic School of Medicine. Dr. Crutchfield was also given "first a physician" award, Healthcare Hero, 100 most influential, and one of the Top 100 African-American Newsmakers in the United States by TheGrio, an affiliate of NBC News. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grio\\_Awards](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grio_Awards).

Dr. Crutchfield is the President of the Minnesota Association of Black Physicians. He resides in Mendota Heights, MN with his wife and three children and several hairless sphinx cats.

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