

ACTIVITY: Petting captive sharks
CASE: GSAF 2003.03.10
DATE: Monday March 10, 2003
LOCATION: The incident took place in the shark petting tank of the Florida Aquarium, Tampa, Florida, USA.

NAME: Julie Menke

NARRATIVE: Julie Menke and her 13-month-old daughter, Shannon, had their hands in the five-thousand-gallon shark and stingray petting tank, hoping to touch a small shark that was approaching them, when a passing shark whipped around and nipped Mrs. Menke.



INJURY: Small wound on hand.

FIRST AID: Aquarium staff called for first aid. Mrs. Menke wiped her hand with a baby wipe, sprayed antiseptic on it and put antibiotic ointment on the small wound.

SPECIES INVOLVED: The shark was a 60-centimetre [2-foot] captive shark. Aquarium officials reported that the shark was removed from the tank. Numerous signs are posted around the tank warning that the sharks and stingrays are wild and suggesting how to touch them properly. Aquarium staff said that similar incidents have happened on "rare occasions," but that Mrs. Menke's bite was the first of its type this year.

NOTE: This incident is considered "provoked" because it involved a captive animal.