



Dolphins Get Cures from Coral Slime

Have you ever put medicine on a cut? Dolphins do this, too! Scientists saw bottlenose dolphins in the Red Sea doing a strange thing. The dolphins lined up to rub against corals and sea sponges. When dolphins pushed against them, the corals and sponges let out slime. Scientists tested this slime. They found 17 chemicals that work just like medicine! The slime kills germs and helps with dolphin skin problems. Dolphins are smart! They know how to use nature to heal themselves.



Dolphins are not alone. Humans study coral reefs to find new drugs. Scientists just found a hidden world of tiny living things inside corals. These tiny living things make many different chemicals. Some of the chemicals can fight bad germs that other drugs cannot kill. Coral reef chemicals could give us new medicines for human diseases someday!

Sadly, these coral reefs are in danger. Climate change makes the ocean warmer. This causes some corals to turn white, which is called *coral bleaching*. Other changes in the water make it hard for corals to grow. If coral reefs die, both dolphins and humans lose out. But there is still hope! Scientists have found that some coral reefs can survive climate change. These special coral reefs are in several oceans. We must work hard to protect these healthy reefs. We can save natural medicine for dolphins and future cures for people! ❖



gorgonian coral



leather coral



Ircinia sponge

Rubbing up against certain corals and sponges helps keep bottlenose dolphins' skin healthy.