

## Is a Dolphin a fish?



### Fact

- A dolphin is not a fish.
- Dolphins are marine mammals. A marine mammal is a mammal that spends most of its time in the water.
- All mammals have fur or some hair, they breathe air with their lungs, they're warm blooded, they give birth to babies (instead of laying eggs), and they feed their babies milk produced in the milk glands.
- Dolphins have smooth, shiny skin that helps them move quickly and easily through the water and tiny hairs around their mouths like whiskers. Fish have no hairs anywhere and their bodies are covered with scales.
- Dolphins have a blowhole, which is like a nostril on top of their head. When they come to the surface of the water, the blowhole opens, they breathe out the air in their lungs, then take a new breath, and then close the blowhole again before they dive.  
Fish have gills which means they don't have to come for oxygen. They get the oxygen they need from the water through their gills.
- Dolphins are warm blooded and under the Dolphins skin they have a layer of blubber (fat) which acts as insulation and protects them from the cold.  
Fish are cold blooded so they don't need any insulation and they don't have a layer of fat underneath their skin.
- Dolphins have babies and feed them milk like humans. Most fish lay eggs.

### Do you know

- To breathe while asleep, female Dolphins lie on the water's surface so their blowholes can take in air. Male dolphins sleep just below the surface and rise up every now and then to breathe. This happens automatically, they don't have to wake up to do it.
- A group of Dolphins living together is called a 'Pod'.
- Dolphins can't survive for long out of water. They need water to stop their skin from drying out and getting burnt by the sun. Their bodies are designed to move very easily in water but they can't move very well on land.
- Dolphins are meat eaters. They eat things like fish and squid and they swallow them whole or in large chunks
- Dolphins only have to breathe every few minutes.

### Experiments you can do

Next time you visit the Zoo, or even out for a walk, have a look at the different animals. Can you pick which ones are mammals and which ones aren't?

### Other Investigations

See if you can find out about Opo the famous dolphin from Opononi in the Far North of the North Island of New Zealand.

### Jokes

Do you know the difference between a fish and a piano? You can't tuna fish!

What did the baby dolphin do when he didn't get his way? He whale-d  
Cameron Ekblad