



The Partnership for Healthy Weight Management

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SOME WEIGHT LOSS ADVERTISING CLAIMS HARD TO SWALLOW

PARTNERSHIP FOR HEALTHY WEIGHT MANAGEMENT EXAMINES ADVERTISERS' SCREENING EFFORTS

The Partnership for Healthy Weight Management has launched "Ad Nauseam," a campaign to identify dubious weight loss claims and the media that carried them, it was announced today.

The Partnership, a coalition of scientific, academic, health care, government, commercial and public interest representatives, promotes the responsible marketing of weight loss products and programs. It encourages more effective media screening of ads for weight loss products and services.

To launch the Ad Nauseam campaign, the Partnership contacted nine major media sources that carried 12 dubious weight loss claims, and asked the publications to explain their ad screening policies and adopt policies that require proof of extravagant claims. Only *USA Today* provided a response, and none of the publishers provided information showing an effective ad screening policy.

Coalition partners plan to use the campaign to encourage mainstream media to demand proof before accepting advertising copy that contains extravagant promises of weight loss success. They are inviting the public to assist in the effort by collecting examples of ads that promise the impossible, and sending them to the Partnership at Partnership for Healthy Weight Management, Federal Trade Commission, S-4302, 601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580.

While encouraging media responsibility, the Partnership also is working to increase public awareness of the obesity epidemic in the United States.

"The prevalence of overweight in U.S. adults increased by 50 percent between 1980 and 1994, with currently more than half of adults being overweight," said Dr. William Dietz, director of the Division of Nutrition and Physical Activity for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Given the health risks of overweight and obesity, both individual and public health efforts are needed to reverse this trend."

The Partnership's new consumer guide, "Finding a Weight Loss Plan That Works for You," is designed to help overweight or obese consumers find weight loss or weight management solutions that fit their needs.

The booklet includes a checklist that enables consumers to compare weight loss plans based on a variety of factors. "The guide advises consumers how to select weight loss programs and services based on specific information from potential providers," said Dietz.

The costs of producing the new consumer guide are being shared by several of the Partners: The International Food and Information Council, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, and Novartis Nutrition Corporation.

The guide is available on the Partnership's website at www.consumer.gov/weightloss. Full color copies of the guide will be available from various Partners.

For more information about the campaign or a copy of the guide, write to The Partnership for Healthy Weight Management, Federal Trade Commission, 601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20580.