



The Partnership for Healthy Weight Management

American Association of Lifestyle Counselors
American Dietetic Association
American Obesity Association
American Society for Clinical Nutrition
American Society of Bariatric Physicians
American Society for Bariatric Surgery
The Center for Bariatric Medicine
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
Chapman & Company
Comprehensive Weight Control
Council on Size & Weight Discrimination
Division of Nutrition Research Coordination
National Institutes of Health
eDiets.com
Federal Trade Commission
Bureau of Consumer Protection
The George Washington University
Obesity Management Program
Health Management Resources
International Food Information Council
Jenny Craig, Inc.
Knoll Pharmaceutical Company
Lindora Medical Clinics
Maryland Department of Health and
Mental Hygiene, Division of
Cardiovascular Health and Nutrition
Medical University of South Carolina
Weight Management Center
The National Heart Lung and Blood
Institute, National Institutes of Health
The National Institute of Diabetes and
Digestive and Kidney Diseases
National Institutes of Health
The New York Obesity Research Center
North American Association for the
Study of Obesity
Novartis Nutrition Corporation
Pharmacists Planning Service, Inc.
Shape Up America!
Slim-Fast Foods Company
Society for Nutrition Education
Tanita Corporation of America
The Theodore VanItallie Center for
Nutrition and Weight Management
St. Lukes-Roosevelt Hospital Center
University of Colorado
Center for Human Nutrition
US Food and Drug Administration
Center for Food Safety and
Applied Nutrition
Weight Watchers International, Inc.
Wheat Foods Council

AD NAUSEAM

“I lost 93 pounds! . . . quickly, easily & no dieting.”
“Lose up to 2 Pounds Daily . . . Without Diet or Exercise.”
“You lose weight even if you eat too much.”
**“New Medical Breakthrough! Lose A Pound A Day
Without Changing What You Eat.”**

It seems that every time you open up a magazine or newspaper, or turn on a TV or radio, there’s another ad for a miracle product promising effortless weight loss. And most of them promise that their product makes it possible to lose weight while you eat all your favorite foods and without having to exercise. (“There now exists an all natural, bio-active weight loss compound so powerful, so effective, so relentless in its awesome attack on bulging fatty deposits that it has virtually eliminated the need to diet.”) They make healthy pursuits like balanced nutrition and an active lifestyle dirty words. And they hint that all you need to do to look like the bikini-clad model in the picture is to send away for a bottle of “miracle” pills.

Each year from January through May, many people start to think about how they’ll lose weight before they try on their bathing suits and tank tops. This is the when companies advertise their weight loss products and programs to appeal to peoples’ desire to look svelte and shapely for the summer months. Many companies advertise their products and services responsibly, but others promise effortless weight loss from “miracle” pills or gadgets. They inundate the media with ads full of hype and empty promises. It’s enough to make you sick.

There are no weight loss miracles. Sensible weight loss and healthy weight management generally require eating less and exercising more. Any advertisement for a weight loss product or service that says you don’t have to change your eating habits or increase your physical activity level to lose weight is selling false hope.

Many advertisements for weight loss products and services are scientifically groundless. Yet mainstream newspapers, magazines, radio stations, and broadcast and cable TV outlets run ads for weight loss products that routinely promise the impossible. And many people believe the ads because they appear in the media they trust.

To call attention to the media's responsibility to screen ads for weight loss products and services that promise far more than they can scientifically deliver, the Partnership for Healthy Weight Management is inaugurating **Ad Nauseam**, a new campaign.

- Every year, the Partnership for Healthy Weight Management will publish a list of claims made in ads during the previous year for products or services that promise results so extravagant, any responsible media outlet should have demanded proof before accepting them for publication.
- Media outlets that published or broadcast the ads will be identified.
- Media indicating they have adopted strategies to screen out dubious ad claims for weight loss products also will be identified.

In publishing its list, the Partnership is challenging the media to demonstrate their ability to exercise reasonable screening measures before accepting ads for publication.

The Partnership also invites the public to participate in searching out questionable weight loss advertisements. Consumers who find ads that they think may contain dubious claims for weight loss products should save the ad and the publication it appeared in and send it to the Federal Trade Commission staff. Call the Federal Trade Commission's toll-free helpline at **1-877-FTC-HELP**, e-mail your information using the FTC's online complaint form at www.ftc.gov/ftc/complaint.htm or contact the Partnership by mail at the FTC:

Federal Trade Commission
Bureau of Consumer Protection
601 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW
Room 4302
Washington, DC 20580
Attention: Partnership for Healthy Weight Management

Ad Nauseam: The year 2000 Ads Nauseam include the following dubious claims:

- x “I LOST 93 POUNDS! . . . QUICKLY, EASILY & NO DIETING.’ New. Now Available Without A Prescription. . . . People have reported losing the first 10 pounds within a few days and up to **50 pounds the first month**. Even if you want to lose 100 or more pounds [product name] can be your answer.”

- x “**LOSE UP TO 2 POUNDS DAILY . . . WITHOUT DIET OR EXERCISE**
‘I Lost 44 POUNDS in 30 DAYS’
NEVER be fat again with the [product name] . . . The [product name] eliminates fat for effortless weight loss. Same results as: Jogging 10 miles per week. An hour of aerobics per day. 15 hours of swimming or cycling per week.”

- x **The Miracle of Body Fat Reduction** Where do you want to lose weight? It’s the same for everyone. Body fat always gravitates to the stomach, the buttocks, that hips and legs. [Product name] will help to rapidly reduce the fat in all these areas. It does this by redirecting these problem fat cells to the muscles of the body where it can be burned off more easily. By taking just one tablet before every meal, the weight gaining process can be averted by simply maintaining that same plan.”

- x “**FIRST TIME IN THE U.S.A. THE SENSATIONAL FRENCH WEIGHT LOSS DISCOVERY WATCH POUNDS PRACTICALLY MELT OFF YOUR BODY FROM DAY ONE . . . AS EXCESS FAT AND UNSIGHTLY CELLULITE ARE INSTANTLY ATTACKED! Eliminates 10 - 20 - 35 - 50 pounds with ease.**
 - x NO EFFORT REQUIRED: eat everything you normally eat.
 - x NO RISK TO YOUR HEALTH: no fatigue, no side effects, no mood changes. A 100% natural method to lose weight.
 - x NO DIETING EVER: no food restrictions, or exercise programs.
 - x NO CONSTRAINTS OF ANY KIND: your day to day activities do not change. The only change is how much better you will look.”

- x “**Imagine Losing As Much As 50% Of All Excess Fat In Just 14 Days! NOT EVEN TOTAL STARVATION CAN SLIM YOU DOWN AND FIRM YOU UP THIS FAST – THIS SAFELY! . . . LOSE up to 1 FULL POUND EVERY 8 HOURS. LOSE up to 2 1/2 to 3 FULL POUNDS EACH DAY and you do it without counting calories.**”

- x “**Amazing Fat Fighting Pill Ends Hunger - Guarantees Super Fast Weight Loss! U.S. Patent reveals weight loss of as much as 28 lbs. in 4 weeks and 48 lbs. in 8 weeks...** There now exists an all natural, bio-active weight loss compound so powerful, so effective, so relentless in its awesome attack on bulging fatty deposits that it has virtually eliminated the need to diet. . . . **Eat all your favorite foods and still lose weight (pill does all the work)**”

- X “This extraction of sweet acids contained in tropical fruits will allow anyone, including those who have never succeeded in losing weight, to activate their metabolism and lose up to 14 pounds per week.”
- X **New Medical Breakthrough! ‘Lose A Pound A Day Without Changing What You Eat’ . . .** You will get a risk free opportunity to get the trim, sexy body you’ve always dreamed of in days or weeks, instead of months or years, without going through painful exercise and unbearable diets.”
- X “WATCH FAT MELT AWAY WITH [product name] No impossible exercise! No missed meals! No dangerous pills. No boring foods or small portions! Just fast and easy, effective weight loss! [Product name] is the easiest way to successfully lose weight you’ll ever try. It doesn’t require gruelling exercise. There are no dangerous pills or tablets to take. Best of all, you continue to eat your favourite [sic] foods!”
- X “**The new fat-fighter.** Slimming capsules that soak up fat! . . . This brand new Swiss formulated high power diet-pill has been created and discovered by Dr. _____, M.D., for men and women to lose weight and bind fat from foods you have eaten. The idea is as brilliant as it is simple. Have you ever seen an overweight fish? Or an oyster with a few pounds too many? Everyone knows that sea animals never get fat. That’s because their bodies contain [product name] which is now available as a diet pill for everybody who wants to lose unwanted fat. [Product name] reduces body fat deposits in the belly, thighs, and butt. It also makes sure that the fat from your last meal leaves your body before being digested.”
- X “NOW EVERYONE CAN EASILY BURN OFF EXCESS WEIGHT WITHOUT CHANGING DIET OR TAKING EXERCISE! . . . You do not have to change the food you eat. This is not a starvation diet - and you do not have to take gruelling pointless exercise. [Product name] starts incinerating your fat and slimming your figure from day one. It is 100% natural so it is totally safe. We guarantee that you’ll lose between 2 and 8 pounds a week until you reach your target weight and sexy figure -- and you won’t put the fat back on!”
- X “**You lose weight even if you eat too much.** These active pineapple [product name] tablets that you can now receive on a free trial basis force your body to dissolve all its excess fat. You should know that 8 tablets contain the weight loss power of 16 whole pineapples. Consequently, even if you continue to eat normally, even if you eat too much, you are literally forced to lose your excess pounds. You will lose at least 16 pounds in the first two weeks. And at least six pounds every week thereafter.”

Media Culpa: This year's collection of dubious ad claims were published in the following magazines and newspapers during 1999 and the first two months of 2000:

Cosmopolitan Magazine
Esquire Magazine
McCall's Magazine
Redbook Magazine
Woman's Day Magazine

The Atlanta Journal - Constitution
The [Denver] Rocky Mountain News
USA Today

Smart Source [A publication of News America, FSI, Inc.]

Staff of the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection, a PHWM partner, assisted the Partnership by writing to the publications listed above and invited them to (1) explain their media screening policies and (2) if they had not already done so, adopt screening policies for weight loss ads that would require proof of extravagant claims. *USA Today* provided a response (attached).