

FTC Consumer Alert

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Office of Consumer and Business Education

Radiation Shields: Do They ‘Cell’ Consumers Short?

These days, it seems like everyone has a cell phone. It’s no wonder that promoters have begun to pitch shields as protection against the radiation the phones emit. But the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), the nation’s consumer protection agency, says current claims for the shields are “all talk.”

According to the FTC, there is no scientific proof that the so-called shields significantly reduce exposure from electromagnetic emissions. In fact, says the agency, products that block only the ear-piece — or another small portion of the phone — are totally ineffective because the entire phone emits electromagnetic waves. What’s more, these shields may interfere with the phone’s signal, cause it to draw even more power to communicate with the base station, and possibly emit more radiation.

Studies are ongoing about any relationship between the emissions from cell phones and health problems.

Nevertheless, for cell phone users who want to limit their exposure to the electromagnetic emissions from their phones, the FTC suggests limiting your cell phone use to short conversations; increasing the distance between your antenna and your head by using a hands free set or a car phone with the antenna outside the car; or avoiding using cell phones where the signal is poor.

The FTC works for the consumer to prevent fraudulent, deceptive and unfair business practices in the marketplace and to provide information to help consumers spot, stop and avoid them. To file a complaint or to get free information on consumer issues, call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357), or use the complaint form at www.ftc.gov. The FTC enters Internet, telemarketing, identity theft and other fraud-related complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to hundreds of civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad.

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February 2002