

FTC Consumer Alert

Federal Trade Commission ■ Bureau of Consumer Protection ■ Division of Consumer & Business Education

Evaluating Diabetes Claims? Be Smart. Be Skeptical.

Evaluating online claims for diabetes products is a two-step process. First, be smart. Then, be skeptical. The Federal Trade Commission, the nation's consumer protection agency, says it's best to check any product out with your health care provider before you buy it. That's because some fraudulent marketers try to make money by peddling products that sound great, but just don't — and can't — work as promised.

Here are some tips on how to spot scams before you get stung.

- **A promise that a product can cure diabetes is a tip-off to a rip-off.** There's no pill, patch, tea, herb, or other "miracle" treatment you can buy on the Internet that can make your diabetes go away forever.
- **Ads that promise too much generally deliver nothing.** Don't buy any product that claims it can do it all — stabilize your blood sugar, end your need for insulin, regenerate your pancreas, reduce your cholesterol, and cause easy weight loss.
- **A product that claims to be a "scientific breakthrough" may be a bust.** Researchers around the world are racing to find better treatments for diabetes, so genuine scientific discoveries make front-page news. If the first you hear about a new treatment is an ad on the Internet, be suspicious.
- **Ads that try hard to sound scientific are suspect.** Technical terms don't necessarily mean medical proof. And the presence of a doctor in an ad is no guarantee the product works. Scam artists have been known to dress models to look like experts.
- **Don't be swayed by a questionable "success" story.** Despite what a company claims, there's no guarantee that "A.B. of Hometown, USA" had the advertised results — or is even a real person.
- **A money-back guarantee does not prove that a product works.** Scam artists who offer a guarantee have been known to take your money and run.
- **If an ad for a product makes you curious, ask your healthcare provider about it before you try it — or buy it.** If you're thinking about trying a new product, run it past a doctor, nurse, dietician, or other health professional who knows your case well.

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, visit ftc.gov or call toll-free, 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357); TTY: 1-866-653-4261. 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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