
I LOST $350
IN TWO WEEKS.
Ask me how!
AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO
RED FLAG
BOGUS WEIGHT LOSS CLAIMS
A REFERENCE GUIDE
FOR MEDIA ON
BOGUS WEIGHT LOSS
CLAIM DETECTION.

RED FLAG | BOGUS WEIGHT LOSS CLAIMS

If the claim seems too good to be true, it probably is. **RED FLAG** it! Help your company stop bogus weight loss claims before they injure consumers.

No publication or station wants to print or air false weight loss claims. The best way to avoid running false advertising is to use common sense.

For more information visit www.ftc.gov/redflag.







Misleading weight loss advertising is everywhere, preying on consumers desperate for an easy solution. There is no magic bullet when it comes to losing weight. Claims for diet products that promise weight loss without sacrifice or effort are bogus and in some cases, dangerous.

You can spot false claims for weight loss in the same way you probably already screen ads for taste and appropriateness. The extra moment you take to review a weight loss claim is important for several reasons. It can protect your company from being known as one that promotes rip-offs. And it can prevent your company from getting cheated by those who make false claims. There's a good chance they won't pay their bills. Running false claims also can harm your audience.

The Federal Trade Commission is the government agency responsible for monitoring advertising for deception. Deceptive claims in weight loss advertising are too common. That's why we're asking for your help in spotting these claims for nonprescription diet products, including nonprescription drugs, dietary supplements, skin patches, creams, wraps, earrings, or other products that are worn on the body or rubbed into the skin. This booklet is not intended to apply to claims made for other diet products and services, such as prescription drugs, meal replacement products, low calorie foods, surgery, hypnosis, special diets, or exercise equipment.

This booklet has examples of extreme weight loss product claims. When you spot claims like these, take a moment to RED FLAG them, and pass them on to the appropriate person in your organization. Of course, an ad may make other deceptive claims besides the ones in this booklet, but this gives you a tool to RED FLAG commonly made false claims.

For more information, visit www.ftc.gov/redflag. We appreciate your participation in this effort.

Howard Beales
Director
Bureau of Consumer Protection
Federal Trade Commission



"I got taken by a miracle diet scam...

...and all I lost was $350"



If a weight loss claim seems too good to be true, Red Flag it.

Ads for so-called miracle weight loss products are often empty promises. Despite their claims, there are no easy ways to lose weight and burn off fat. You can help people avoid false weight loss product claims. Read the ad before you publish or air it, and **RED FLAG** false ads.

It takes a few minutes to become familiar with the examples of false ad claims in this booklet. These claims can be conveyed in many ways, and some ads may contain conflicting statements. It is the overall message that has the greatest effect on your audience. Ask yourself, "What messages will our audience take from this ad?" Generally, headlines, pictures, captions, and bolded text are more powerful than body copy and footnotes. These messages can also be communicated through expert or celebrity endorsements and consumer testimonials, which are often highlighted in weight loss ads.

Several of the following claims refer to "substantial weight." This means "a lot of weight" and would include weight loss of a pound a week for more than four weeks or total weight loss of more than 15 pounds in any time period. Substantial weight loss can also be suggested by references to dress size, inches, and body fat. But, as the examples illustrate, ads may convey this message without using specific numbers.

If you get an ad or spot for a nonprescription drug, dietary supplement, skin patch, cream, wrap, earring, or other product that is worn on the body or rubbed into the skin that includes these claims, **RED FLAG** the ad: Take it to your supervisor, and point out the claims that strike you as false. Then, your company can stop these bogus claims before they injure consumers.

A claim is too good to be true if it says the product will...

- Cause weight loss of two pounds or more a week for a month or more without dieting or exercise — p.6
- Cause substantial weight loss no matter what or how much the consumer eats — p.8
- Cause permanent weight loss (even when the consumer stops using product) — p.10
- Block the absorption of fat or calories to enable consumers to lose substantial weight — p.12
- Safely enable consumers to lose more than three pounds per week for more than four weeks — p.14
- Cause substantial weight loss for all users — p.14
- Cause substantial weight loss by wearing it on the body or rubbing it into the skin — p.16

No Dieting. No Gyms.

Lose 2 Pounds a Week—Or More. And Still Have Time for 18 Holes.

What if you could eat as much as you want – and exercise as little as you want – and still lose pounds of unsightly, bulging fat? Now you can – with new Fattacker™.

Attacks fat — and destroys it — no matter what you eat or do.

FATTACKER

WEIGHT LOSS PRODUCTS, Inc.



How much weight will you lose? How about two pounds a week? Maybe even two pounds a *day*? Imagine, in just 43 days, you could lose 60 pounds! And you'll see results fast – without back-breaking exercise.

Order new Fattacker™ today! Just $49.95 for a 30-day supply. Call 1-800-555-1234 today!

Introducing New Fattacker™

1. Fat cells attract Fattacker.
2. Fattacker surrounds fat cells.
3. Fattacker destroys fat cells!

Discovered by scientists active in the space program, new Fattacker™ is a revolutionary new way to lose weight. All-natural and completely safe, Fattacker™ uses a unique bio-active process that actually isolates and destroys fat cells. So fat literally melts away!

Become a "new you" for less than $50. And you can save even more! Get a 60-day supply for just $79.95. Order new Fattacker™ today!

Lose inches QUICKLY – and do nothing but take this little pill.

This is NOT an actual advertisement. The products and companies mentioned here do not exist and appear as examples only. Any resemblance to an actual product or company is purely coincidental.

RED FLAG

Lose two pounds or more per week (for a month or more) without dieting or exercise.

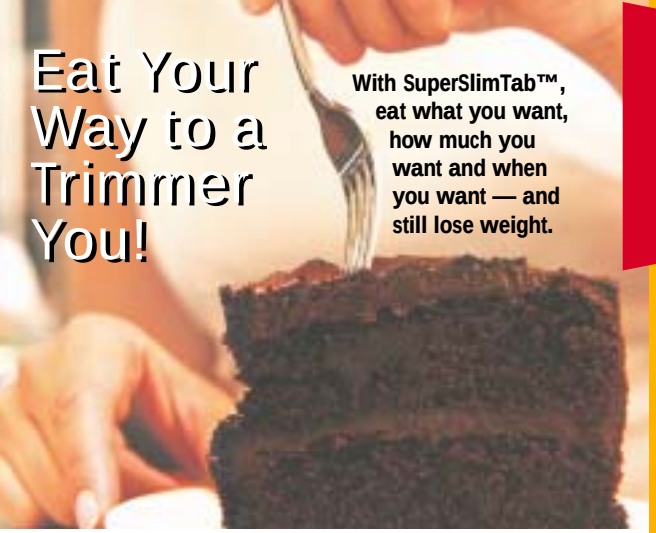
Reality Check

Meaningful weight loss requires consuming fewer calories and/or increasing exercise. Ads that promise substantial weight loss without diet or exercise are false. A claim is false if it says or suggests that users can lose weight fast without changing their lifestyles, even if the ad doesn't mention specific amounts of weight loss or time periods.

The four measurements used in weight loss ads are pounds, dress size, inches, and body fat, any one of which can be used to convey the message of substantial weight loss.

Variations

- "Today, there exists a safe, 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." [Next to, before, and after pictures with quote, "I lost 36 pounds in 5 weeks."]
- "I lost 30 pounds in 30 days even though I ate all my favorite foods."
- "Lose up to 2 pounds daily without diet or exercise."
- "I lost 15 pounds in 30 days without having to change my eating habits or lifestyle in any way. See results fast without back-breaking exercise."
- "Go from a size 12 to a size 6; lose inches QUICKLY, and do absolutely nothing but take this pill."



SuperSlimTab™ users report weight losses of a pound every 12 hours. That's two pounds a day! And there's no need to count calories, skip meals or give up the delicious foods you love the most. Eat hot dogs, hamburgers, pizza. Have your cake, and eat it, too!

Lose 2 Pounds a Day! New SuperSlimTab™ contains a breakthrough ingredient that lets you have a full meal and dessert too – and still lose weight. The more you eat the more you will lose. This miracle pill does all the work!



SuperSlimTab
WEIGHT LOSS SUPPLEMENT
100 CAPSULES

Just $19.95 a Week for a 6-Week Supply!
Call 1-800-555-1234 Today.

Order the revolutionary SuperSlimTab™ today, and then start watching the pounds melt away! Eat your way to a slimmer, trimmer you, and blast away dress sizes and belt notches lightning fast.

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RED FLAG

Weight loss will be substantial no matter what or how much the user eats.

Reality Check

It is impossible to eat unlimited amounts of food – any kind of food – and still lose weight. Any claim to that effect in an ad or commercial is false. Some products may help curb appetite or cravings. For those products, it's okay to say people can eat what they want so long as it is clear from the ad or commercial that people will not want to eat as much food as before they started using the product.

Variations

- "This breakthrough ingredient has patients losing one full pound every 12 hours, two pounds or more each day, and all without counting calories, without missing a single meal, and without giving up those delicious, mouthwatering foods they love the most."
- "My 'formula for living' lets you eat hamburgers, hot dogs, fries, steak, ice cream, sausage, bacon, eggs and cheeses! And STILL LOSE WEIGHT!"
- "Eat all the foods you love, and still lose weight (pill does all the work)."
- "I lost nine pounds during my first week eating just as I always do — going to parties, even eating gobs of vacation goodies, including my favorite food: ice cream. Four weeks later, and I've lost another 27 pounds."
- "Eat any mouthwatering food you want, and still blast away dress sizes and belt notches lightning fast."

Take Pounds Off — and Keep 'em Off — With Singapore Slim Miracle Pill.

Discover the Ancient Singapore Secret That Takes Weight Off Quickly — and Keeps It From Coming Back!

From the remote rainforests of the Far East comes this amazing product that helps you shed those unwanted pounds – forever! Thousands have already used it. They've lost weight faster than they ever dreamed possible. And best of all, **they kept the weight off!!!**

"All my life, I went back and forth – between thin and fat. Then I discovered Singapore Slim™ Miracle Pill. I lost all the weight I wanted, and I've kept it off for five years!"

Sally S., Chicago

Tired of Yo-Yo Diets? With Singapore Slim™ Miracle Pill, You'll Lose the Weight Quickly – and Keep It Off Permanently!
If you're tired of going back and forth — between slim and not-so-slim — Singapore Slim™ Miracle Pill is for you. It contains a special fat-blocking enzyme that's scientifically proven to enter your digestive system. Yet despite its ability to burn fat, it causes no unpleasant side effects. It keeps burning fat, and you keep shedding pounds.



SINGAPORE SLIM MIRACLE PILL

Now Available for the First Time in the U.S. Order Today by Calling 1-800-555-1234.

Until now, you'd have to spend hundreds of dollars to fly overseas for Singapore Slim™ Miracle Pill. Now, it's available for the first time in the U.S. And at just $59.95 – enough for a 6-week supply – it's an unbelievable value. Order today!

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RED FLAG

Weight loss will be permanent (even when the user stops using the product).

Reality Check

Without permanent lifestyle changes (eating less food and/or doing more exercise), weight loss does not last once product use stops. This does not include claims for permanent or long-term weight loss that clearly communicate that continued use of the product is required. For example, "Lose it and keep it off as long as you use our product."

Variations

- "Take it off! And keep it off!"
- "Thousands of dieters are already using it and losing weight faster than they have before…and keeping the weight off."
- "For 15 years, Mary yo-yo dieted without success. Fed up and desperate, she discovered a new miracle product to lose weight easily and permanently."
- "The amazing 'Fat-Sponge in a Pill' that lets you eat more, weigh less and finally…yes, finally…slim down for good for the rest of your life."
- "Tired of yo-yo diets without success? This miracle product lets you lose the weight easily and permanently."
- "It can help you quickly lose the weight, and keep it from returning."
- "People who use this product say that even when they stop using the product, their weight does not jump up again."

Lose up to 2 Pounds a Day!

FatFoe Eggplant Extract Blocks the Fat — No Matter What You Eat!

FatFoe™ Eggplant Extract Does More Than Take Fat Off. It Blocks the Fat Before It Reaches Your System.

FatFoe™ Eggplant Extract guarantees rapid weight loss. Just add it to the foods you like – anything from bacon and eggs to fried chicken. Once it's in your system, it forms a gel that absorbs and surrounds excess fat and calories, preventing them from forming body fat. And **FatFoe™ Eggplant Extract** is completely flavorless and odorless. You won't even know it's in your food – until you start losing amazing amounts of weight.

Order FatFoe™ Eggplant Extract – and watch the weight come off your body. Call 1-800-555-1234.

Because it's such a diet breakthrough, you won't find FatFoe™ Eggplant Extract in stores. Instead, order your 6-week supply for just $49.95. And discover the secret the monks of Linguini Prima Vera have known for decades.

REDUCE FAT ABSORPTION BY 76%, AND LOSE SUBSTANTIAL WEIGHT INSTANTLY.



For centuries, the monks of the Linguini Prima Vera Monastery in a remote part of northern Italy were a puzzlement. Despite their sedentary lifestyle, they were amazingly thin. Finally, they revealed their secret: a unique extract of eggplant they added to the foods they ate every day.

EGGPLANT EXTRACT FatFoe FAT BLOCKER

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RED FLAG

Block the absorption of fat or calories, and lose substantial weight.

Reality Check

No fat blocker can block enough fat or calories to cause lots of weight loss. Even legitimate fat blockers must be used with a reduced-calorie diet to work.

Variations

- "Lose up to two pounds daily…Apple Pectin is an energized enzyme that can ingest up to 900 times its own weight in fat. That's why it's a fantastic FAT BLOCKER."
- "Brindall berries cause very rapid and substantial weight loss by reducing fat absorption by 76%."
- "Super Fat-Fighting Formula guarantees rapid weight loss. Shortly after ingesting small amounts of the component, it dissolves into a gel that absorbs and surrounds excess fat and calories, preventing them from forming body fat."
- "This product blocks fat before your body absorbs it; the pounds will melt away effortlessly."
- "The Super Fat-Fighting Formula inhibits fats, sugars and starches from being absorbed in the intestines and turning into excess weight, so that you can lose pounds and inches easily."
- "Mulletwood is an 'all-natural ingredient' designed to attract and absorb excess calories and transport them out of your system. Watch the weight come off your body."



How Would You Like to Lose 30-40-50 Pounds? Now You Can!

WITH ULTRA THINQUIK™, YOU'RE GUARANTEED TO LOSE AT LEAST 3 POUNDS A WEEK.

AND IT WORKS FOR EVERYONE! NATURALLY AND WITH NO SIDE EFFECTS.

Want to slim down for your high school reunion that's just a month away? Or look your trimmest, prettiest best on your wedding day?

Now with Ultra ThinQuik™, you can take off all the weight you want in almost no time. Because new Ultra ThinQuik™ is safe, effective — and fast!

Nothing else works faster, better or easier. Ultra ThinQuik™ is an amazing new formula of weight loss compounds that combines rapid weight loss with increased energy. Too powerful to find in any store, it's yours now when you order today. Just $49.95 delivers a 3-week supply of powder developed to help you lose weight in a hurry!

ULTRA THINQUIK
FAT LOSS SUPPORT FORMULA



Fast Weight Loss! Unbelievable Energy! All in One Delicious Drink. Guaranteed to Work!

Why Waste Time on Fad Diets and Expensive Exercise Machines? Order Ultra ThinQuik™, Drink Before Each Meal and Start Losing Weight Tomorrow!

Call 1-800-555-1234 today.

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RED FLAG

Consumers can safely lose more than three pounds per week for a period of more than four weeks.

Reality Check

Losing more than three pounds per week over multiple weeks can result in gallstones and other health complications, so the safety claim is false. If the claim is that NO dieting is required, the claim is false for that reason too.

Variations

- "Lose 30-40-50 pounds. Yes! You can lose three pounds per week, naturally and without side effects."
- "Neptune's Potion is safe and effective," with customer testimonials claiming more than 12 pounds of weight loss per month.

RED FLAG

The product causes substantial weight loss for all users.

Reality Check

No product will work for everyone.

Variations

- "Lose excess body fat. You cannot fail, because no will power is required."
- "Lose 10-15-20 pounds. Works for everyone, no matter how many times you've tried and failed before."
- "Everyone in our study lost substantial weight. Failure is impossible."
- "Melt away ugly body fat. The product targets fat and eliminates it, regardless of body type and size."

"Who Would Have Thought a Pair of EARRINGS Could Help Me Lose 20 Pounds?"



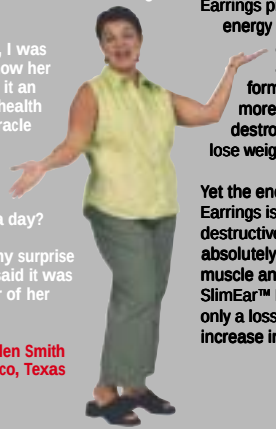
SlimEar
a product of WearAwayFat, Inc.

"One day, I ran into an old high school friend I hadn't seen in years, and she looked fantastic! While I had gained a good 20 pounds, she looked slimmer and healthier than ever. In fact, she looked even better than she had looked in high school.

"Of course, I was dying to know her secret. Was it an expensive health club? A miracle diet drink? Or was she just running five miles a day?

"Imagine my surprise when she said it was all a matter of her earrings!"

Evelen Smith
Waco, Texas



SlimEar™ Earrings Disrupt the Formation of Fat Cells. The Longer You Wear Them, the More Weight You Lose.

Tiny magnets embedded in SlimEar™ Earrings produce a wave of magnetic energy that's amplified by your skull and spinal column. This wave actually disrupts the formation of fat cells. What's more, over time, it actually destroys existing fat cells. So you lose weight.

Yet the energy produced by SlimEar™ Earrings is selective. Despite how destructive they are to fat cells, they're absolutely harmless to healthy cells, muscle and tissue. In fact, many SlimEar™ Earring wearers report not only a loss of weight, but an increase in energy.

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RED FLAG

Diet patches, creams, wraps, earrings, and other products worn on the body or rubbed into the skin cause substantial weight loss.

Reality Check

This is a product category. It includes diet patches, topical creams and lotions, body wraps, special clothing, rings, earrings, body belts, and shoe inserts, among others. These products do not cause substantial weight loss. A claim that people can lose even a pound or more a week using one of these devices is false.

Variations

- "Lose two to four pounds daily with the Neptune Diet Patch."
- "Neptune Reducing Cream drops pounds and inches from your thighs."



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