

Help Note

Slimming guidelines for the press



General points

1. A slimming regime in which the intake of energy is lower than its output is the main self-treatment for achieving weight loss. Advertisers should hold scientific evidence to support all their claims and be able to prove that their slimming plan is nutritionally well balanced (except for producing a deficit of energy).
2. Testimonials alone are not sufficient to prove that a slimming product or method works.
3. Advertisements for unproven weight loss products should not include any direct or implied efficacy claims. If the name of the product implies efficacy (e.g. 'Fat Buster', 'Sleep and Slim') a prominent disclaimer must be added stating that the product has not been proven to aid weight loss.
4. Advertisements for diet aids (e.g. *Herbalife – a meal replacement product*) should make clear how they work and prominence should be given to the role of the diet.
5. Advertisers should not give the impression that, by following their advertised method, dieters cannot fail.
6. These guidelines do not cover exercise machines.
7. Please contact the Copy Advice team if you are unsure about acceptable claims for these products.

Unacceptable claims

8. Claims that products can, for example, *boost metabolism, inhibit dietary fat absorption, melt fat, soak up fat, break down fat, suppress appetite, block fat etc*, are almost always unproven and are likely to break the Code and may also be medicinal claims. Further advice can be sought from the MHRA (www.mhra.gov.uk)

CAP has seen no evidence that products containing the following can assist in weight loss; **Aminopyline, Citrus Aurantia, Chitosan, Chromium Picolinate, CLA, Garcinia Cambogia, Guarana Extract, L-Carnitine, Lecithin, Ribose.**

-
9. Prescription-only slimming products should not be advertised to the general public.
-
10. Advertisers should not give the impression that, by following their method or using their product, dieters can eat as much as they want and still lose weight.
-
11. Combining a diet with an unproven weight loss method does not justify making slimming claims for the method.
-
12. Obesity (BMI > 30) is recognised as a serious medical condition that requires medical intervention. Its treatment should therefore not be advertised unless it is carried out under qualified medical supervision.
-
13. Advertisements should also not feature people who were/are obese and should not target obese people.

Cellulite treatments

-
14. Advertisers cannot claim that a treatment can specifically target “cellulite”
-
15. We have seen no evidence to show that creams, electrical “stimulation” devices or pills can reduce, or reduce the appearance of, “cellulite”.
-
16. Advertisements for treatment involving *ENDERMOLOGIE* can claim that it may ‘*Temporarily Reduce the Appearance of Cellulite*’. Claims that the treatment can smooth away, reduce, eliminate or remove “cellulite” are, however, unacceptable.

What is an acceptable amount of weight that can be lost in a given time?

-
17. In line with the Code, Department of Health guidelines, testimonials and other claims in advertisements for proven products should not normally claim **more than 2lbs/week weight loss**.
-
18. Claims that individuals have lost exact amounts of weight should be compatible with good medical and nutritional practice and should give details of the time period involved.
-
19. General claims that precise amounts of weight can be lost within a stated period or that weight can be lost from specific parts of the body are not allowed.

Advice on specific marketing communications is available from the Copy Advice team by telephone on 020 7492 2100, by fax on 020 7404 3404, or you can log a specific written enquiry via our online request form <http://www.copyadvice.org.uk/Ad-Advice/Bespoke-Copy-Advice.aspx>. The Copy Advice website at www.copyadvice.org.uk contains a full list of Help Notes as well as access to the AdviceOnline database, which has links through to relevant Code rules and ASA adjudications.

Revised August 2010