

Slimming guidelines for the press

Advertising Guidance (non-broadcast)

Legal, decent, honest and truthful



Foreword

The Committee of Advertising Practice (CAP) offers guidance on the interpretation of the UK Code of Advertising (the CAP Code) in relation to non-broadcast marketing communications.

The Broadcast Committee of Advertising Practice (BCAP) offers guidance on the interpretation of the UK Code of Broadcast Advertising (the BCAP Code) in relation to broadcast marketing communications.

Advertising Guidance is intended to guide advertisers, agencies and media owners how to interpret the Codes but is not a substitute for those Codes. Advertising Guidance reflects CAP's and/or BCAP's intended effect of the Codes but neither constitutes new rules nor binds the ASA Councils in the event of a complaint about an advertisement that follows it.

For pre-publication advice on specific non-broadcast advertisements, consult the CAP Copy Advice team by telephone on 020 7492 2100, by fax on 020 7404 3404 or you can log a written enquiry via our [online request form](#).

For advice on specific radio advertisements, consult [Radiocentre](#), and for TV advertisements, [Clearcast](#).

For the full list of Advertising Guidance, please [visit our website](#).

Revisions to this guidance:

Revised: August 2010

General

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).

Testimonials alone are not sufficient to prove that a slimming product or method works.

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.

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.

Advertisers should not give the impression that, by following their advertised method, dieters cannot fail.

These guidelines do not cover exercise machines.

Please contact the Copy Advice team if you are unsure about acceptable claims for these products.

Unacceptable claims

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. They 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.

Prescription-only slimming products should not be advertised to the general public.

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.

Combining a diet with an unproven weight loss method does not justify making slimming claims for the method.

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.

Advertisements should also not feature people who were/are obese and should not target obese people.

Cellulite treatments

Advertisers cannot claim that a treatment can specifically target “cellulite”.

We have seen no evidence to show that creams, electrical “stimulation” devices or pills can reduce, or reduce the appearance of “cellulite”.

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?

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.

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.

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.

Committee of Advertising Practice

Mid City Place, 71 High Holborn

London WC1V 6QT

Telephone 020 7492 2200

Textphone 020 7242 8159

Email: enquiries@cap.org.uk

 [@CAP_UK](https://twitter.com/CAP_UK)

Legal, decent, honest and truthful

