

AFP Advertising Policy for Nutritional Supplements, Foods, Food Additives, and Other Substances and Devices with Health Claims

One of *AFP*'s goals is to present clinically useful and valid information to its readers. Nutritional supplements and other non-drug substances, including foods, food additives, and so-called nutraceuticals, as well as health devices, sometimes make apparent claims with regard to health that have not undergone a formal review process, such as U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval. For this reason, *AFP* has adopted a surrogate review process to determine a product's safety and efficacy with regard to the product's apparent indication and use. This is done to provide our readers with information that we deem reliable, and to avoid implying a tacit endorsement of the product by virtue of our publishing the ad in the journal or placement on the *AFP* web site.

For a product that makes health claims—either explicitly or implicitly—one of the two following criteria must be met in order for it to meet *AFP*'s standards of advertising. In cases of judgment regarding the appearance of health claims, or the support in the medical literature for a product's safety and efficacy, the decision of *AFP* will prevail.

1. The product has FDA approval for the indication and use advertised.
2. The product has adequate support in the medical literature for its safety and efficacy with regard to the apparent indication and use. Support will be judged by *AFP* to have been met if one of the following applies:
 - The support is contained in one of the sources of evidence-based reviews outlined in *AFP*'s Authors' Guide, aafp.org/journals/afp/authors/guide/manuscript.html.
 - The support is contained in a clinical guideline by one of the major medical organizations listed on *AFP*'s Editorial Advisory Board, aafp.org/journals/afp/about/advisory.html, such as the American Heart Association, the American Diabetes Association, the American Academy of Pediatrics, and the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists.
 - The support is contained in an endorsement by a major governmental health organization, such as one of the Centers of the National Institutes of Health.

On the other hand, if one of the above sources states that there is inadequate support for a product's safety and efficacy with regard to the apparent indication and use, then the ad will not be approved.

In addition, the advertisement must acknowledge common or important potential adverse effects, as well as acknowledge relevant limitations, controversies, or conflicting evidence when they exist. The presentation must not be so unbalanced as to be judged unacceptably misleading.

In cases in which there is conflicting evidence, *AFP* will look for the preponderance and strength of the evidence to support a given use. In such cases, *AFP*'s decision will prevail.