

WHO CARES:

*Sources of Information About
Health Care Products and Services*



A publication from the Federal Trade Commission
and the National Association of Attorneys General

INTRODUCTION

Every day, millions of senior citizens face questions about health-related products and services they see in the marketplace, get in the mail, read about in the newspaper and on the web, and hear about on radio and television. Unfortunately, it can be difficult for consumers to tell the difference between facts and fiction when it comes to selecting a health care product or service.

The Federal Trade Commission and your state Attorney General, as well as other agencies and organizations, can help you see through misleading or deceptive claims and protect your consumer rights.

The FTC and your state Attorney General have written this booklet to help you learn how to spot misleading or deceptive claims and where to get information—whether you're managing your own health care or that of a family member or a friend. We hope it will encourage you to ask questions and speak out if your instincts tell you that something about a health care product or service may not measure up to its promise.

ALTERNATIVE MEDICINES

“My brother has been diagnosed with cancer. He wants to find out about alternative medicine as a possible treatment. He has seen ads for a clinic that claims to have an amazing success rate using unconventional approaches to cure many forms of cancer and other serious ailments. Should he believe them?”

Many unconventional treatments for cancer and other diseases are on the market. A few have undergone rigorous scientific testing for their curative value. Many that have been tested don't show effectiveness. Still, some forms of alternative therapy are recognized as helpful in caring for patients and helping them cope with some illnesses.



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YOUR STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL
www.naag.org

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
Consumer Response Center
Toll-free 1-877-FTC-HELP (382-4357)
www.ftc.gov

FOOD AND DRUG ADMINISTRATION
Toll-free 1-888-463-6332
www.fda.gov

NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE
Cancer Information Service
Toll-free 1-800-422-6237
www.nci.nih.gov

AMERICAN CANCER SOCIETY
Toll-free 1-800-227-2345
www.cancer.org

Usually, a primary care physician is the best source of information about alternative medicine as a supplement to conventional treatments. If someone tries to sell you an alternative treatment by promising that it is effective, ask for a copy of the studies that prove it. Then ask your primary care physician or family doctor to review the studies to determine their credibility.

If you think you've been misled by advertisements for either alternative medicine or conventional treatments, be cautious and complain to the FTC.

*Think you've been misled or deceived by an advertisement for
a health care product or service or a medical procedure?
Contact your state Attorney General
or the Federal Trade Commission.*

YOUR STATE ATTORNEY GENERAL

Office of Consumer Protection

Your State Capital

Many Attorneys General have toll-free consumer hotlines.
Check with your local directory assistance.

FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION

Consumer Response Center

600 Pennsylvania Ave, NW

Washington, DC 20580

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