



Tips for Misleading Product Claims

Due to the rapid spread of misinformation on social and traditional media outlets, it is more critical than ever to be an informed and reliable source. With 67% of people trusting the nutrition information they see on social media,¹ it is critical to be able to identify accurate information and help others to do the same. The food label and marketing information can be overwhelming, but this guide provides some quick ways to identify and manage any potentially misleading claims that may come up.

2 key types of nutrition misinformation:

Health fraud is when a food or beverage product is promoted as healthy yet there is no scientific evidence to support this claim. Health fraud is conducted intentionally to profit off of a product's sales. Any product that promises a "miracle cure" or a "quick fix" is health fraud. This type of fraud preys on human emotions (like guilt or fear) and often falls short of promises.²

A **misdirected health claim** is a claim made on a food or beverage product to make a consumer think it is healthier than it is. Example: When a product claim indicates a food is low in fat but is still high in calories. Someone trying to lose weight may see the "low fat" claim, thinking it will support their health goals, but not realize it's still high in calories.²

IDENTIFYING potentially misleading product claims

There are no "quick fixes"

Food products or dietary supplements promising a "quick fix", such as fast weight loss or pain relief, are falsely misleading consumers. Choosing healthy habits they can stick with is more important for achieving and maintaining any changes.³



You don't need a product to "detox" your body

Some food / beverage products and supplements may claim to "detox" your body, but if you have a healthy liver and kidneys, your body does this for you.²



There are no "miracle cures"

Food / beverage products or dietary supplements claiming to cure a variety of diseases like cancer and chronic pain, are likely inaccurate and preying on human emotions (like fear).²



MANAGING potentially misleading product claims

Look at the science

Products sometimes take simple study designs and exaggerate, oversimplify, or otherwise misrepresent results to inappropriately support a claim.

Claims shouldn't be made on a single study - multiple studies should be used to confirm results are accurate and consistent.

Research findings should be compared to actual products - while there may be scientific evidence supporting a specific ingredient's potential health benefits, if the product doesn't contain the same amount studied, it may not deliver the intended results.⁴



Empathize with clients

Your clients may be influenced by claims made on food / beverage products or dietary supplements that may provide a physical performance benefit such as running faster or lifting heavier weights.

Keep an open dialogue so they trust you with their questions about these products.

Educate with empathy and help them understand the facts about what they are consuming.

Emphasize importance of proper training and a diet while not minimizing their interest in these products or supplements.



Consult with Experts

Reach out to a qualified health professional like a Medical Doctor or a Registered Dietitian Nutritionists (RDN) if you have questions whether a food product or dietary supplement is backed by science, safe, and healthy.⁴

Visit [eatright.org](https://www.eatright.org) to find a credentialed nutrition expert near you



References

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