

HPRA note on Non-pharmacy retail advertising of medicines

The role of the Health Products Regulatory Authority (HPRA) is to protect and enhance public and animal health by regulating medicines, medical devices and other health products, including cosmetics. Information about the HPRA is available online at www.hpra.ie.

The HPRA is the regulatory body in Ireland responsible for regulating how medicines are advertised and for taking action when advertisements are not compliant with the [Medicinal Products \(Control of Advertising\) Regulations 2007](#).

The HPRA is providing this note at this time to assist non-pharmacy retailers in complying with the requirements on how medicines that they sell (called medicines for general sale) may be advertised. This note does not purport to be an interpretation of law and/or regulations and it is not a replacement for the 'HPRA Guide to Advertising Compliance' available at www.hpra.ie.

What is advertising?

Advertising is any activity or inducement designed to promote the sale, supply or consumption of a medicine. Shop-floor and online promotions of medicines are considered advertising.

Advertisers must not

- Advertise a medicine that has not been authorised or registered with the HPRA. Medicines that are authorised or registered with the HPRA for general sale are listed in the 'Latest General Sales Product Information' list at www.hpra.ie.
- Advertise a medicine for any purpose other than the therapeutic purpose for which it has been approved. The therapeutic purpose will be stated on the medicine's packaging and labelling.
- Advertise a medicine in a manner that does not promote the rational use of medicines. Price promotions should not encourage customers to bulk buy medicines and/or encourage the stockpiling of medicines in the home.
- Advertise a medicine in a manner that would mislead the customer. An advertisement should not suggest that a medicine is a food product or a cosmetic product nor suggest that a medicine is safe because it is natural.
- Advertise that buying or taking a medicine negates the need for a consultation with a medical doctor.
- Suggest that a medicine can be used to enhance the health of a customer and that not taking the medicine would or could have a negative impact on the customer's health.
- Use misleading claims in respect of recovery from illness due to use of a medicine.
- Refer in an advertisement to a recommendation made by a celebrity, a scientist or a health professional to buy or use the medicine.
- Provide customers with free samples of medicines for promotional purposes.

Advertising queries related to human medicines should be sent to compliance@hpra.ie.

HPRA
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