

Selling Hope Not Help

Have you noticed the different ways people try to "sell" you a nutritional product that won't help you? Here are some words often used to sell you a pill, a book or a food.

What do these words mean?

"Balance" your body's chemistry, "strengthen" your immune system, "stimulate" your body's ability to heal itself. These words are vague and cannot be measured. If they can't be measured, how do you know you are feeling better? According to law, dietary supplements can use these kinds of words on labels as long as there are no claims to cure a disease.

What do THESE words mean?

Often on the cover of nutrition or diet books you will see the following words about the author, "a leading nutrition expert" or "the world's foremost scientist." These titles do not mean anything and anyone can make them up.

What studies and are they related to the product?

Often products contain the words "backed by hundreds of scientific studies." What does this mean? First, the number of studies is not important - it IS important whether these are well-done studies. Often, diet and nutrition books contain a lot of references to studies but when you look further the studies cannot be found, are not related to the product being promoted or the studies are not well-done.

"What have you got to lose?"

Most people's response to this is - nothing! Not true. Some nutritional supplements and herbs are harmful. Also, when you focus on something that will not work, you lose valuable time focusing on something that will work. And, not to be forgotten - you will lose money better spent on healthy foods.

"Money back guarantee"

These words may appear to protect you from wasting money on a product that doesn't work. However, many of the companies that sell nutritional products move around a lot. If you try to contact them to get your money back, you may find they cannot be contacted anymore.

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- References:
1. Barrett, S. "10 Ways to Avoid Being Quacked"
 2. Barrett, S. and Herbert, V. "25 Ways to Spot Quacks and Vitamin Pushers"
 3. Smith, Gregory L. "Common Questions About Science and "Alternative" Health Methods"

Written By: Ellen Schuster, M.S., R.D.
Former Nutrition and Food Specialist
OSU Extension Service
Family and Community Development Program

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