



United States of America
FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION
Southwest Region

1999 Bryan St., Ste. 2150
Dallas, Texas 75201

May 7, 2020

WARNING LETTER

VIA EMAIL TO administrator@drhoffman.net

Dr. Ronald Hoffman
635 Madison Avenue, Suite 1402
New York, New York 10022

Re: Unsubstantiated Claims for Coronavirus Prevention or Treatment

To Whom It May Concern,

This is to advise you that FTC staff has reviewed your website at <https://drhoffman.com/> on May 2, 2020. We have determined that you are unlawfully advertising that certain products treat or prevent Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Some examples of Coronavirus treatment or prevention claims on your website include:

- In marketing materials titled “Coronavirus treatment and prevention strategies,” you claim that “there are several possible ways that certain supplements may impede the virus: . . . 1. By enhancing innate immunity. Many vitamins and natural products... may boost natural killer (NK) cells, which are critical defenders against viruses. 2. By blocking viral ‘docking’ . . . 3. By reducing inflammation and protecting cells... 4. By preventing viral replication. . . . There are natural compounds like elderberry that exhibit protease inhibition which might be relevant to the coronavirus.”
- In marketing materials titled “Coronavirus treatment and prevention strategies,” you describe “the most plausible natural therapies for COVID-19,” including:
 - “**Vitamin D**: . . . has demonstrated efficacy for respiratory health.... and has anti-inflammatory properties... Take 2000-5000 IU per day and consider ‘loading’ with 50,000 IU per day—but for no more than 3 days—if you feel as though you’re coming down with something.”;

- “**Melatonin**: A scholarly paper argues that melatonin—at low doses like 0.5 or 1 mg per day—might curb virulence of the coronavirus...”;
- “**Nitric Oxide**: Insufficient nitric oxide... may lead to... a reduced capacity to stop viral replication. In fact, nitric oxide has been shown to inhibit the SARS virus, the coronavirus predecessor.”;
- “**SPMs**: Specific Pro-Resolving Mediators are high-octane derivatives of fish oil, with potent anti-inflammatory effects that may put the brakes on lung damage in severe cases of COVID-19.”;
- “**DHEA**: Dehydroepiandrosterone is an androgenic supplement, available over the counter. It is suitable for both men and women. Studies show it boosts resistance to viruses,” and you cite a study of encephalitis in mice to support the claim that “DHEA not only reduced viremia and death rate, but also significantly delayed the onset of the disease and mortality.”;
- “**Beta glucans**: These are naturally-occurring polysaccharides (complex sugars) found in the walls of yeast and certain foods. They have powerful immune-enhancing properties vs. respiratory viruses. A popular yeast-derived beta glucans product is AHCC, marketed variously under brand names like Immpower, EpiCor, and Immunokinoko.”;
- “**Andrographis**: Part of the Traditional Chinese Medicine armamentarium, andrographis is a proven antiviral and anti-inflammatory and is currently under investigation for application vs. the coronavirus.”; and
- “**Skullcap**: Scutellaria baicalensis has proven its mettle against influenza, and has a plausible mode of action against coronavirus.”

It is unlawful under the FTC Act, 15 U.S.C. § 41 *et seq.*, to advertise that a product can prevent, treat, or cure human disease unless you possess competent and reliable scientific evidence, including, when appropriate, well-controlled human clinical studies, substantiating that the claims are true at the time they are made. For COVID-19, no such study is currently known to exist for the products identified above. Thus, any Coronavirus-related prevention or treatment claims regarding such products are not supported by competent and reliable scientific evidence. You must immediately cease making all such claims.

You are also advised to review all other claims for your products and immediately cease making claims that are not supported by competent and reliable scientific evidence.

Within 48 hours, please send a message to James E. Elliott via electronic mail at jelliott@ftc.gov describing the specific actions you have taken to address the FTC’s concerns. If you have any questions regarding compliance with the FTC Act, please contact Zachary A. Keller at zkeller@ftc.gov.

Very truly yours,

Dama J. Brown
Regional Director
Southwest Region