

WEIGHT-LOSS DRUGS

NAAFA'S OFFICIAL POSITION:

Since weight-loss drugs fail to achieve permanent weight loss and can result in negative health consequences, since the governmental agencies responsible for regulating weight-loss drugs has not protected consumers from dangerous weight-loss drugs, and since people taking diet drugs are rarely given sufficient information to allow them to give true informed consent, the National Association to Advance Fat Acceptance strongly discourages people of any size from taking drugs for the sole purpose of weight loss. Further, NAAFA condemns obesity researchers and drug manufacturers who profit from inadequately tested weight-loss drugs. Many consumers' motivation for weight loss is to escape size discrimination and weight-related social stigma and such motivation necessitates a political rather than a medical response. Health status can be improved independent of weight loss. Therefore, NAAFA demands that the national governmental health agencies deny approval of any weight-loss drug presented for approval that does not demonstrate clear health benefits apart from temporary weight loss.

NAAFA ADVOCATES:

- That local, state and federal legislatures introduce, pass, enact, and enforce legislation which protects consumers against dangerous or ineffective weight-loss drugs, whether prescription, over-the-counter, "all natural," or "herbal."
- That state and federal regulatory agencies adopt regulations to prevent endangerment to public health from weight-loss drugs, whether prescription, over-the-counter, "all natural" or "herbal."
- That state and federal regulatory agencies pose the same question for weight loss drugs as for any other class of drug, i.e., "Does this treatment improve health?"
- That federal regulations require all weight-loss drugs, whether prescription, over-the-counter, "all natural," or "herbal," to clearly display a health warning (similar to those found on cigarettes) regarding limited temporary results and possible hazards and side effects.

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- That financial ties between obesity researchers/diet drug advocates and diet drug manufacturers be disclosed in all regulatory hearings and published writing regarding the drugs.
- That regulations be adopted that require drug manufacturers to publish five-year (minimum) follow-up studies and "success" rates. Information on all such statistics must be verifiable by objective outside researchers and clearly displayed on all weight-loss drugs and advertising.
- That national governmental health agencies, including the Centers for Disease Control, track morbidity and mortality caused by weight-loss drugs and weight regain when drugs are discontinued, and publicize the findings.
- That researchers conducting epidemiological studies be required to obtain information on diet pill use by their subjects.
- That national government health agencies include input from consumer advocacy groups in establishing public health policy about weight-loss drugs.
- That national governmental health agencies support independent research on the negative health effects of weight-loss drugs.
- That local and state medical boards adopt policies against the use of weight-loss drugs.
- That insurance companies and government programs deny payment for weight-loss drugs.
- That private consumer protection organizations, such as Consumers Union, conduct biannual studies on the efficacy of weight-loss drugs.
- That advertising of weight loss drugs, whether prescription, over-the-counter, "all natural," or "herbal," be prohibited.
- That institutions such as the military, hospitals, schools, mental institutions, or prisons provide adequate food and not force anyone to take weight-loss drugs.
- That employers, schools, and judges never demand the use of weight-loss drugs as a condition for employment, promotion, admission, avoiding incarceration, adoption or child custody.
- That health care professionals and medical institutions never deny any medical treatment to patients who choose not to take weight-loss drugs.
- That individuals considering taking weight-loss drugs study available literature on long-term results and side effects and carefully weigh the possible benefits against the risks of drug use.

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- That individuals considering taking non-prescription or "herbal" weight-loss drugs be aware that they are not safe or effective despite being non-prescription, "all natural," or "herbal."

NAAFA RESOLVES TO:

- Advocate for the safety and emotional and physical well-being of consumers by attempting to influence public policy about weight-loss drugs.
- Educate the public, the media, and potential weight-loss-drug users as to the low long-term success rates and possible negative health consequences of weight-loss drugs.
- Promote alternatives to weight-loss drugs in a manner which is sensitive to the emotional and financial investment which many fat people have made in repeated weight loss attempts.
- Provide advice and emotional support to individuals who have suffered negative health consequences from taking weight-loss drugs.
- Alert consumers to weight-loss drugs which have been determined to be dangerous, have lawsuits pending against them, or are being investigated by government agencies.
- Assist plaintiffs and/or their attorneys engaged in litigation involving weight-loss drugs, by providing them with referrals to expert witnesses who might testify on their behalf.