

Advertising: Diet / Weight Loss

Thanks to [Middleweb](#) and [School Library Journal](#) for recommending this resource.

See also [ADVERTISING](#)

NEW: [Watch](#) our January 10, 2022 media literacy webinar on this subject.

WHAT'S NEW?

In the past year, a number of prescription drugs were unveiled that promised weight loss. And now, those drug messages join traditional weight loss messages all over the airwaves (and online). Here is a sample:



KEY QUOTES

"Testimonials from individuals are not a substitute for science, and that's what Americans need to understand."

FTC Chairman Deborah Platt Majoras, quoted in [Jan. '07 AP story](#) about FTC fines against weight loss product producers for false/misleading advertising " If you see an ad for a

weight-loss product making fantastic claims, keep your money in your pocket,” said Lydia Parnes, Director of the FTC’s Bureau of Consumer Protection. [Source](#)

INTRODUCTION

Did you ever hear the phrase “caveat emptor” (“let the buyer beware”)? That’s pretty good advice, especially when it comes to the promises made by diet and weight loss advertisers after the new year. Yes, it’s that time of year again—for the weight loss ad explosion. Magazines (like these below) in particular feature cover stories on losing weight. And weight loss messaging seems to be everywhere, especially in these new year’s publications:



Do your students know how to analyze/read/deconstruct print ads? I have [previously written about](#) how to do just that for MiddleWeb.com (a website for middle grades parents and educators.) [Here is one worksheet](#) that you might use with your students: it includes some good starting questions for them to consider.

Presented here are some resources, ads, and activities that

will encourage young people to use “critical thinking skills” as it relates to these persuasive forms of advertising. Since teaching ad technique and awareness is in [most state’s health teaching standards](#), these ads are perfect for use in classroom settings. If you have comments, please send them to me: fbaker1346@gmail.com

BACKGROUND

In early December 2003, the Federal Trade Commission issued new guidelines to the media about accepting advertisements for weight loss products which may be deceptive in their claims. Read [how the media covered the story](#).

[FTC Advice](#) issued December 2008: Have some healthy skepticism. Consumers can learn how to spot health scams, such as fake cancer cures and bogus weight loss products, and do some research on buying generic drugs, Lasik eye surgery, and using dietary supplements. Consumers can learn about rights they may not even know they had – like the right to obtain a copy of prescriptions for eyeglasses or contact lenses at www.ftc.gov/health. (See also the FTC website: [Red Flag: Bogus Weight Loss Claims](#))

Presented below are several ads for educators/parents to consider using. Use of these ads in this context does not imply any deception. Rather I invite educators/parents/students to use [media literacy concepts](#) and [critical thinking questions](#) and apply them to these ads.

Typical ads for analysis & deconstruction (many located on social media, TV and web pages)



FTC Fake WebSite for Student evaluation: [FatFoe](#)

Recent news articles/research:

NEW [BBB Warns About Misleading Ads for Weight Loss Products](#) (Jan. 2024)

[The Food Industry Pays Influencers To Shape Eating Habits](#) (Sept 2023)

[What Kelloggs' Diet Ads Reveal About Diet Culture](#) (July 2023)

[How Diet Advertisers Approach 2023](#) (January 2023)

[How to Spot Misleading Ads For Weight Loss Products](#) (January 2023)

[Diet apps are peddling plans that may cause deadly weight loss.](#) (January 2021)

[The Truth Behind Weight Loss Ads](#) (video)

[TikTok Bans Ads for Diet Pills; Restricts Other Weight Related Ads](#) (Nov. 2020)

[Celebrity Ads for Diets Should Be Banned](#) (November 2019)

[Instagram & Facebook Ban 'Miracle' Diet Posts](#) (November 2019)

[Spotting Fake Celebrity Endorsements in Ads](#) (October 2016)

[Public Deceptions: Diet Lies from Social Media](#) (March 2016)

[How Far Can Companies Stretch The Truth In Ads](#) (Sept. 2014)

[FTC Fines Marketers for Deceptive Claims](#) (July 2014)

[Dieters beware: Those before-and-after weight-loss photos aren't always legit](#) (February 2014)

[FTC cracking down on deceptive weight-loss ads](#) (January 2014)

VIDEOS: [If Celebrity Diet Ads Were Honest](#) (Cracked)

[If Diet Ads Told The Truth](#)
[The Truth Behind Diet Advertising](#)

[Vintage Weight Loss Ads](#)
[Diet companies now targeting men](#)
[Fake weight-loss ads on Web lead to FTC settlement](#) (March 2012)

[Viral Video Reveals Dramatic Before & After Infomercial Diet Tricks](#) (Feb. 2012)

[Why Weight-Loss & Diet Commercials Are Dangerous](#) (Jan. 2012)

[New Year Brings New Diet-Company Ads, Programs](#)

[Jenny Craig Ends Ad Campaign After Lawsuit](#)

[Weight Watchers sues Jenny Craig for Bertinelli ad](#)

[Marketers of Unproven Weight-Loss Products Ordered to Pay Nearly \\$2 Million](#) (Jan. 2010)

[FTC wants more scrutiny of weight-loss ads](#) (July 2009)

[New Year, New Round of Diet Programs](#)

[Internet Marketers of Dietary Supplement for Weight Loss Agree to Pay \\$150,000](#) (Dec. 2008)

[Before & After Ads Lead to Bias](#) (Nov. 2008)

[TrimSpa's Ads Change After Anna Nicole](#)

[Claims in diet-pill ads are too good to be true, FTC](#)

[Sellers of Popular Weight Loss Supplements Pay \\$25 Million Over FTC Allegations of Deceptive Advertising](#)

[Diet ads under scrutiny](#)

[FTC To Require Four Weight Loss Pill Companies To Change Ads And Pay Penalties](#)

[What You Need to Know About Weight-Loss Programs](#) (Jan.2007)

[Americans fall prey to weight-loss supplement hype](#) (Oct.2006)

[How adolescent girls interpret weight loss advertising](#) (July 2006)

[FTC to start naming bogus ad broadcasters](#)

[Diet & Hype](#) (Newsweek March 2006)

["Before and After" diet ads not fair on obese people: Study](#)

[FTC Stops Bogus Ads for 'Bio Trim' and Other Weight-loss Products](#) (Nov.2005)

[This diet pill contains saturated advertising](#) (July 2005)

[Diet pill use on the rise among teenage girls](#) (May 2005)

[FTC Sees Drop in Ads with False Weight-Loss Claims](#) (April 2005)

[Weight Loss Ad Claims Disputed, Study](#) (Dec.2004)

[Diet ads promote stereotypes](#)

[Miracle-Diet Ads Lie? Well, Duh!](#) (TIME)

[Weighing the evidence in diet ads](#) (FTC)

Download [Soloflex Ad](#) (August 2006)

Online ad for TIMSPA featuring before and after shots of actress/model Anna Nicole Smith.

(I don't know who they're trying to fool, but the picture on the left was obviously taken years earlier)



America's #1 "DIET PILL"

YES!

Zantrex-3™

The First And Only Non-Ephedra
"Diet Pill" With A Kick!™

- ✓ **Rapid Weight Loss™**
- ✓ **Incredible Energy**

Together In One Amazing NEW Super Pill!



YES! It's Zantrex-3. America's hottest selling new "Super Pill!"

Finally, rapid weight loss and incredible energy in one power-packed "Super Pill." Zantrex-3... the kind of intense, non-stop energy kick you want from a diet pill... and more. Much more!

New Zantrex-3... 546% more weight loss* than the leading ephedrine-based diet pill... and that's a fact.

Here's another fact: Zantrex-3 is way beyond ephedrine, way beyond fat-burner way beyond everything... Zantrex-3 is a new category of bifurcated weight-loss compounds providing both rapid weight loss and incredible energy packed into one little pill. New Zantrex-3 is so powerful you won't find it in any supermarket next to so-called "Flintrock" vitamin for kiddies.

Zantrex-3 is serious weight loss... we're talking about rapid sustained weight loss and extreme energy... 5 times more weight loss than the leading ephedrine-based diet pill and all the energy you'll ever want or need... day or night.

So if you're finally ready to look great, feel great, and have energy to burn... Zantrex-3 is the one formula you've got to experience. Hurry and get your Zantrex-3 today. Supplies are extremely limited.

**New Zantrex-3...
a life changing experience!**

* NOTICE *

While Zantrex-3 contains no ephedra, Zantrex-3 is not a weak "ephedra alternative," but a powerful ephedra replacement... which means Zantrex-3 is not for everyone.

But if you want rapid weight loss and an intense, non-stop energy kick, you need Zantrex-3.

Now available at:

GNC CVS/pharmacy VITAMIN WORLD Vitamin Shoppe
and smarter supplement retailers nationwide!

Order Now! 24 hours / Toll-free:

1-800-951-9546 ext. ZB226

visit online at www.Zantrex-3.com



\$49.00
[681 mg capsules]

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100% MONEY-BACK GUARANTEE

If you are not totally satisfied with Zantrex-3, just return the empty container within 30 days for a full, prompt refund, no questions asked!

ZOLLER
Laboratories

*The "546% more weight loss" claim is based solely on Zantrex-3's active weight-loss component. However, Zantrex-3's non-ephedrine, xanthine-based Super Stimulant™ has been shown to produce additional weight loss in some studies.
†For full study details visit www.Zantrex-3.com

small print above reads:

*The "546% weight loss" claim is based solely on Zantrex-3's active weight-loss component. However, Zantrex-3's non-ephedrine, xanthine-based Super Stimulant™ has been shown to produce additional weight loss in some studies.

+For full study details visit www.Zantrex-3.com

Stop being afraid to step on your scale!

"JumpStart Complete's"™ new advanced formula can help take the fear out of stepping on your scale.



JumpStart Complete's™ new advanced ephedra-free formula provides natural ingredients to support healthy blood sugar, to support enhanced metabolism, and help burn fat.* **JumpStart Complete**™ also contains Phase 2™ carb blocker, a clinically proven ingredient that helps keep your body from turning carbohydrates into sugar, which can then turn into fat.*

You wouldn't buy half a shirt, you wouldn't buy half a cookie, don't buy half a diet product. Insist on a complete product that addresses each of your weight loss concerns.

Insist on "JumpStart Complete"™

Here's what the doctors have to say about JumpStart Complete™:

"The most complete weight loss product I have reviewed."

— Dr. T.R. Shantha MD, Ph.D, F.A.C.A.

"... gives you the support needed for healthy weight loss."

— Dr. Chris Lewis, D.C

Listen to what our satisfied customers have to say:

"I lost 8 pounds in the first few weeks on the program, it works!"

— Lisa Miller, Pharmacy Tech

"JumpStart Complete™ has reduced my appetite. I can push away from the dinner table and I am not hungry later."

— Jed Carter, Attorney

Order now and stop being afraid of your scale!

To order call 1-866-227-7735
Or log on to www.jumpstartcomplete.com

*These statements have not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. This product is not intended to diagnose, treat, cure or prevent any disease.

