

Advertising Lies

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A lot of advertising statements are carefully crafted to say nothing meaningful or hide potential harm.

Ad Statement	Intended Implication	Actual Meaning
All Natural	Imply that the product is safe or healthy	Everything in the known universe is natural, so All Natural or 100% Natural means nothing. A sandwich of uranium and motor oil on a bed of asbestos is 100% Natural.
Quantities are Limited	Urge you to make a buy decision.	All quantities are limited. The limit may be millions of items or ten, but everything is limited.
Call in the next 10 minutes...	Urge you to make a buy decision.	A lot of charities use this one, but no one is actually timing to see if you respond to the ad within 10 minutes or 10 hours.
Up to \$X or more	Used in loan ads to imply that the number \$X is how much you can get.	Literally it means any amount. Less than X, equal to X, or greater than X means nothing.
Pledge \$X and get a "free" T-shirt	Make you feel special for supporting their cause or charity.	The T-shirt isn't free, you had to pledge \$19/month or whatever amount to get one. And the cost of the shirt and shipping reduces the amount of money the charity gets.
Here are "free" holiday cards	Used in charity mailed marketing, it's a guilt trip to get you to make a donation.	Technically the cards are free, but so is the guilt trip.
(drug or vitamin ad) X is "clinically tested" to ...	Make you think product X has been proven to be effective.	The ad says nothing about the results of the testing and does not say the FDA has approved the product for its claimed purpose. Clinically tested means nothing.
Product uses "proven technology"	Inspire confidence in the product.	Is a nice way to say the product could have been marketed fifty years ago. A radio is proven technology. A steel box is proven technology.
Take this supplement to feel better, more energetic.	It might make you feel better if it does provide vitamins or minerals you are low on.	Supplements are not regulated by the FDA, so they may do nothing or may be harmful. There may also be much cheaper supplements to do the same thing.
Take this supplement to increase your nitric oxide level.	Nitric oxide dilates blood vessels and does lower blood pressure.	It isn't known if the supplement really does increase nitric oxide levels. And if you also take nitroglycerine tablets or those little blue pills for ED, you can lower your blood pressure to unsafe or lethal levels.

Ad Statement	Intended Implication	Actual Meaning
Take this supplement to increase your magnesium level.	Magnesium is an important mineral for protein synthesis, muscle and nerve function, blood glucose control, and blood pressure regulation.	It isn't known if the supplement really does increase magnesium levels. And you don't know if you have a deficit in magnesium, so it may not help at all, and could lead to too much of it. Too much magnesium is bad if you have poor kidney function to eliminate the excess.