



CASE REPORT

1. Complaint reference number	438/07
2. Advertiser	Proctor & Gamble (Metamucil Fibresure)
3. Product	Health products
4. Type of advertisement	TV
5. Nature of complaint	Health and safety – section 2.6
6. Date of determination	Wednesday, 16 January 2008
7. DETERMINATION	Dismissed

DESCRIPTION OF THE ADVERTISEMENT

This television advertisement features identical twin girls sitting at a dinner table with a bowl of salad in front of them as a voiceover advises "Getting kids to eat veggies can be hard...veggies don't always end up where you want them." Shots are shown of a brussel sprout stuck on the head of a sports trophy, tomato on a window pane behind curtains, a piece of broccoli at the bottom of a fish tank, and a doll with peas where its eyes should be. Mother is then seen in the kitchen preparing Spaghetti Bolognese as the voiceover continues "Top up your family's fibre needs with new Metamucil Fibresure. It's 100% natural and dissolves into food without affecting the taste" and the mother is seen to sprinkle the Fibresure into the dish and mix it in. The mother places the meal in front of the two girls who eat with relish - still ignoring the bowl of salad on the table, and when finished, one girl licks the plate clean.

THE COMPLAINT

A sample of comments which the complainant/s made regarding this advertisement included the following:

Children being discouraged to eat green vegetables which are shown in the ad sitting on the table. The mother puts the Metamucil fibre powder on the dinner which basically shows that children do not have to eat vegetables to receive fibre!

THE ADVERTISER'S RESPONSE

Comments which the advertiser made in response to the complaint/s regarding this advertisement included the following:

An objective viewer, having regard to the entire advertisement, would not believe that we intended to substitute Metamucil fibre for vegetables. Contrary to the complainant's views, our advertising recognises the fact that diets are lacking in fibre and children frequently do not eat enough food that is high in fibre.

The advertisement in question does not imply that Metamucil fibresure should be a substitute for eating vegetables or fruit. Metamucil is a supplement to the consumption of fruit and vegetables, hence the use of the term "Top up your family's fibre needs."

Further, the advertisement is pitched towards a parent whose children display comical ways of hiding their vegetables. By adding Metamucil Fibresure, a tasteless, dissolvable, non-thickening fibre to food, the consumer message is that fibre is important for the diet. The bowl of vegetables/salad on the table is one source of fibre as is the fibre (inulin) present in Metamucil Fibresure.

THE DETERMINATION

The Advertising Standards Board (“Board”) considered whether this advertisement breaches Section 2 of the Advertiser Code of Ethics (the “Code”).

The Board noted the complainant's concern that the advertisement encouraged children to be fed the product rather than vegetables.

The Board viewed the advertisement and agreed that the advertisement could be taken by some viewers as suggestive of replacing vegetables with the advertised product. However the Board considered that there were enough elements in the advertisement that were more likely to indicate that the product was suitable on occasions as a top up rather than a replacement. Images such as that of the salad bowl on the table and the discarded vegetables around the house, suggest that the children depicted are given or offered vegetables.

The Board did indicate that the advertisement could have tried to clearly avoid any misinterpretation by including a statement that the product is not a substitute for vegetables or whole foods but rather has a specific but limited use.

Overall however the Board considered that the advertisement did not clearly represent the product as a vegetable replacement and that as a result the advertisement did not breach Section 2.6 of the Code. Finding that the advertisement did not breach the Code on other grounds, the Board dismissed the complaint.