

General health therapies

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Note: This advice is given by the CAP Executive about non-broadcast advertising. It does not constitute legal advice. It does not bind CAP, CAP advisory panels or the Advertising Standards Authority.

Many marketers of health-related products or therapies would like to list ailments that they believe their products or therapies can treat. The Code, however, contains specific rules that restrict the types of claims marketers other than qualified health professionals may make.

CAP has produced a Help Note on Health, Beauty and Slimming Marketing Communications that Refer to Medical Conditions to help the industry produce or publish marketing communications that comply with the Code. The Help Note classifies ailments as either those that can be acceptably referred to in marketing communications targeted at the general public or those that cannot be referred to because they are considered too serious to be diagnosed or treated without the relevant medical supervision. The guidelines in the Help Note do not apply to marcoms for medicines that hold an MHRA product licence or marketing authorisation to treat a serious or prolonged ailment.

Examples of ailments that may be referred to in marketing communications (subject to the marketer being able to prove the efficacy of the product or therapy) include: arthritic pain, trouble sleeping, smoking cessation and minor sports injuries. Examples of ailments that cannot usually be referred to in marketing communications include: arthritis, depression, diabetes, infertility and impotence (Rule 12.2). The lists are not exhaustive and are updated from time to time in line with ASA adjudications and prevailing medical opinion.

CAP has produced therapy specific guidance which practitioners may find useful.

See '[Therapies: References to Medical Conditions](#)' and '[Claims in testimonials and endorsements](#)'.

[Guidance on Health Therapies and Evidence QA \(Sept 2011\)](#)

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