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FTC Announces False Advertising Settlement

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Beiersdorf, Inc., the maker of skin cream Nivea, has reached an agreement to settle charges of false advertising with the Federal Trade Commission. The proposed settlement includes a \$900,000 fine and prevents the skin cream maker from making representations that regular use of its My Silhouette! skin cream significantly reduces consumers' body size.

According to the FTC administrative complaint, Beiersdorf, Inc. marketed its skin cream My Silhouette! using false claims that by applying the cream's "Bio-slim Complex," consumers would see visual results of weight loss. "The tried and true formula for weight loss is diet and exercise," stated FTC Chairman Jon Leibowitz. The company used nationwide television ads and search engine optimization techniques in its advertising campaign. Agreements with Google provided that when consumers searched the words "stomach fat," "Nivea slim silhouette," or "thin waist" on the search engine, they found ads implying that My Silhouette! could tone their stomachs, thin their waists, and help them lose weight.

The proposed settlement also bars Beiersdorf from claiming that any drug, dietary supplement, or cosmetic causes weight or fat loss or a reduction in body size, unless the claim is backed by reliable scientific evidence.

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