

**UNITED STATES OF AMERICA
BEFORE FEDERAL TRADE COMMISSION**

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B220032**

COMMISSIONERS: **Robert Pitofsky, Chairman**
 Mary L. Azcuenaga
 Janet D. Steiger
 Roscoe B. Starek, III
 Christine A. Varney

In the Matter of

ABBOTT LABORATORIES,
a corporation.

DOCKET NO. C-3745
DECISION AND ORDER

The Federal Trade Commission having initiated an investigation of certain acts and practices of the respondent named in the caption hereof, and the respondent having been furnished thereafter with a copy of a draft complaint which the Bureau of Consumer Protection proposed to present to the Commission for its consideration and which, if issued by the Commission, would charge respondent with violation of the Federal Trade Commission Act; and

The respondent, its attorneys, and counsel for the Commission having thereafter executed an agreement containing a consent order, an admission by the respondent of all the jurisdictional facts set forth in the aforesaid draft complaint, a statement that the signing of the agreement is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by respondent that the law has been violated as alleged in such complaint, or that the facts as alleged in such complaint, other than jurisdictional facts, are true and waivers and other provisions as required by the Commission's Rules; and

The Commission having thereafter considered the matter and having determined that it had reason to believe that the respondent has violated the Act, and that complaint should issue stating its charges in that respect, and having thereupon accepted the executed consent agreement and placed such agreement on the public record for a period of sixty (60) days, and having duly considered the comments received, now, in further conformity with the procedure prescribed in § 2.34 of its Rules, the Commission hereby issues its complaint, makes the following jurisdictional findings, and enters the following order:

1. Respondent Abbott Laboratories is a corporation organized, existing and doing business under and by virtue of the laws of the State of Illinois with its principal office or place of business at One Abbott Park Road, Abbott Park, Illinois 60064.

2. The Federal Trade Commission has jurisdiction of the subject matter of this proceeding and of the respondent, and the proceeding is in the public interest.

ORDER

DEFINITIONS

For purposes of this order, the following definitions shall apply:

1. Unless otherwise specified, "respondent" shall mean Abbott Laboratories, a corporation, its successors and assigns, and its officers, agents, representatives and employees.
2. "In or affecting commerce" shall mean as defined in Section 4 of the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. § 44.

I.

IT IS ORDERED that respondent, directly or through any corporation, subsidiary, division or other device, in connection with the manufacturing, labeling, advertising, promotion, offering for sale, sale, or distribution of Ensure products, any other food, or any other dietary or nutritional supplement in or affecting commerce, shall not make any representation, in any manner, expressly or by implication, about:

- A. The extent to which doctors or other professionals recommend such product for healthy adults; or
- B. The recommendation, approval, or endorsement of such product by any person, profession, group, or other entity,

unless, at the time it is made, respondent possesses and relies upon competent and reliable evidence, which when appropriate must be competent and reliable scientific evidence, that substantiates the representation. For purposes of this order, "competent and reliable scientific evidence" shall mean tests, analyses, research, studies, or other evidence based on the expertise of professionals in the relevant area, that has been conducted and evaluated in an objective manner

II.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent, directly or through any corporation, subsidiary, division or other device, in connection with the manufacturing, labeling, advertising, promotion, offering for sale, sale, or distribution of Ensure products, or any other product advertised, marketed or sold as a meal replacement or meal supplement for healthy adults, in or affecting commerce, shall not misrepresent, in any manner, expressly or by implication:

- A. That one serving of such product provides vitamins in an amount comparable to typical vitamin supplements; or
- B. The absolute or comparative amount of any vitamin or any other nutrient or ingredient contained in or provided by such product.

If any representation covered by this Part either directly or by implication conveys any nutrient content claim defined (for purposes of labeling) by any regulation promulgated by the Food and Drug Administration, compliance with this Part shall be governed by the qualifying amount for such defined claim as set forth in that regulation.

III.

Nothing in this order shall prohibit respondent from making any representation for any product that is specifically permitted in labeling for such product by regulations promulgated by the Food and Drug Administration pursuant to the Nutrition Labeling and Education Act of 1990.

IV.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent, and its successors and assigns, shall for five (5) years after the last date of dissemination of any representation covered by this order, maintain and upon request make available to the Federal Trade Commission for inspection and copying:

- A. All advertisements and promotional materials containing the representation;
- B. All materials that were relied upon in disseminating the representation; and
- C. All tests, reports, studies, surveys, demonstrations, or other evidence in its possession or control that contradict, qualify, or call into question the representation, or the basis relied upon for the representation, including complaints and other communications with consumers or with governmental or consumer protection organizations.

V.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent, and its successors and assigns, shall:

- A. Within thirty (30) days after the date of service of this order, deliver a copy of this order to all current principals, officers, directors, and managers, and to all current employees, agents, and representatives having responsibilities with respect to the subject matter of this order; and
- B. For a period of five (5) years after the date of service of this order, deliver a copy of this order to all future principals, officers, directors, and managers, and to all employees, agents, and representatives having responsibilities with respect to the subject matter of this order, within thirty (30) days after the person assumes such position or responsibilities.

VI.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent, and its successors and assigns, shall notify the Commission at least thirty (30) days prior to any change in the corporation(s) that may affect compliance obligations arising under this order, including but not limited to a dissolution, assignment, sale, merger, or other action that would result in the emergence of a successor corporation; the creation or dissolution of a subsidiary, parent, or affiliate that engages in any acts or practices subject to this order; the proposed filing of a bankruptcy petition; or a change in the corporate name or address. Provided, however, that, with respect to any proposed change in the corporation about which respondent learns less than thirty (30) days prior to the date such action is to take place, respondent shall notify the Commission as soon as is practicable after obtaining such knowledge. All notices required by this Part shall be sent by certified mail to the Associate Director, Division of Enforcement, Bureau of Consumer Protection, Federal Trade Commission, Washington, D.C. 20580.

VII.

IT IS FURTHER ORDERED that respondent, and its successors and assigns, shall, within sixty (60) days after the date of service of this order, and at such other times as the Federal Trade Commission may require, file with the Commission a report, in writing, setting forth in detail the manner and form in which it has complied with this order.

VIII.

This order will terminate on May 30, 2017, or twenty (20) years from the most recent date that the United States or the Federal Trade Commission files a complaint (with or without an accompanying consent decree) in federal court alleging any violation of the order, whichever comes later; provided, however, that the filing of such a complaint will not affect the duration of:

- A. Any Part in this order that terminates in less than twenty (20) years;
- B. This order's application to any respondent that is not named as a defendant in such complaint; and
- C. This order if such complaint is filed after the order has terminated pursuant to this Part.

Provided, further, that if such complaint is dismissed or a federal court rules that the respondent did not violate any provision of the order, and the dismissal or ruling is either not appealed or upheld on appeal, then the order will terminate according to this Part as though the complaint had never been filed, except that the order will not terminate between the date such complaint is filed and the later of the deadline for appealing such dismissal or ruling and the date such dismissal or ruling is upheld on appeal.

By the Commission.

Donald S. Clark
Secretary

ISSUED: May 30, 1997