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## Sensa satiety crystals maker settles two false advertising lawsuits

By Hank Schultz, 27-Nov-2012

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**The manufacturer of Sensa satiety crystals has agreed to settlements in two cases alleging false advertising. In one case the company settled a false advertising lawsuit filed by several California district attorneys. In the other, the company agreed to settle a civil class action lawsuit that is pending final approval.**

The district attorney's complaint, filed under the aegis of the statewide Nutritional Supplement Task Force, questioned claims made on the product and cast doubt on the research that Sensa Products LLC used to back up the claims. The company agreed to the settlement without an admission of guilt connected to the allegations in the complaint.

The company agreed to pay \$800,000 in civil penalties and \$105,000 in restitution to California consumers. Also, as part of the settlement, Sensa Products, LLC and Intelligent Beauty Inc., the parent corporation, are prohibited from continuing to charge customers for shipments sent after a customer has asked to stop the shipments. The companies may not enroll customers in an automatic shipment program without a clear disclosure of the customer's obligations.

### Class action suit settled

In September, the company settled a class action over false advertising claims also filed in California. In that case, which included a number of class action suits combined into one proceeding, the company agreed to set up settlement fund that could total as much as \$9 million applicable to all US consumers who bought the product prior to August 15, 2012. That settlement was pending a final settlement fairness hearing.

Despite the legal setbacks, the company said it is standing by its product and believes in its effectiveness, and agreed to the settlements to avoid ongoing legal fees.

*"The obesity epidemic is at an all-time high and projected to increase to half of the U.S. population by 2030. Sensa has dedicated resources to pursue initiatives aimed at helping educate the public on these issues while promoting healthy eating habits,"* said Kristin Chadwick, President of Sensa Products, LLC.

Sensa is line of scented, flavorless 'tastant' crystals, which contain maltodextrin, tricalcium phosphate, silica, natural and artificial flavors, soy and milk ingredients. The product is the brainchild of neurologist Dr Alan Hirsch, neurological director of the Smell & Taste Research and Treatment Foundation in Chicago.

The product is meant to be sprinkled on food prior to consumption. According to the Sensa website, the tastants *"consist of six different patent-pending scent/flavor combinations that are proven to help trigger the brain mechanism that signals when you are full"*.

The firm claims Sensa is supported by [two clinical trials](#), neither of which have been published in peer reviewed journals.

### Participants reported having less appetite

In the first, conducted by Dr Hirsch, 1,436 patients (mostly women) who completed a six month study, are claimed to have lost an average of 30.5lbs, while those in the 100-person-strong control group lost only 2lbs, on average.

A second six-month study on 83 volunteers is described on the firm's website as a *"double-blind, placebo-controlled study"* conducted by an unnamed *"independent laboratory"*, in which participants lost 27.5lbs or about 14% of their body mass, on average, while those in the control group gained half a pound, on average.

Among the evidence turned up in the class action lawsuit was a deposition of one of the people involved with the second study conducted on Sensa's effectiveness. The *"lead researcher"* agreed that she had no scientific training and was not qualified to conduct a nutrition intervention study, according to the deposition.

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