

<b>COMPLAINT NUMBER</b>	16/384
<b>COMPLAINANT</b>	K Hester
<b>ADVERTISER</b>	Ephraim Health
<b>ADVERTISEMENT</b>	Ephraim Health Digital Marketing
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	19 May 2017
<b>OUTCOME</b>	Settled

**Advertisement:** The Ephraim Health website, [www.ephraimhealth.co.nz/category/colloidal-silver-products/](http://www.ephraimhealth.co.nz/category/colloidal-silver-products/), advertises a range of colloidal silver products which claim to help destroy most types of bacteria, fungi or virus.

**The Chair ruled the complaint was Settled.**

**Complainant, K Hester, said**

ABOUT COLLOIDAL SILVER I've looked into the medical uses of colloidal silver and come up with the following. From these 3 sites:

<http://www.quackwatch.com/01QuackeryRelatedTopics/PhonyAds/silverad.html>

<https://nccih.nih.gov/health/silver>

[http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-supplements/ingredientmono-779-](http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-supplements/ingredientmono-779-Silver+COLLOIDAL+SILVER.aspx?activeIngredientId=779)

[Silver+COLLOIDAL+SILVER.aspx?activeIngredientId=779](http://www.webmd.com/vitamins-supplements/ingredientmono-779-Silver+COLLOIDAL+SILVER.aspx?activeIngredientId=779)

In 1999 the FDA of the USA instituted a rule banning the use of colloidal silver in OTC products. This applies to any non-prescription colloidal silver or silver salt product claimed to be effective in preventing or treating any disease.

Colloidal silver can be applied directly to the skin for acne, burns, and eye, throat, skin, fungal and Staphylococcus infections. I.e. its been shown effective when used topically \*but not when ingested\*. Similarly, it has shown antibacterial properties in the test-tube \*but not in the human body\*.

I think its best summarised by the USA National Center for Complementary and Integrated Health: - There are no high quality studies on the health effects of taking colloidal silver, but we do have good evidence of its dangers.

- Claims made about the health benefits of taking colloidal silver aren't backed up by studies.

- The U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has said that colloidal silver isn't safe or effective for treating any disease or condition.

EPHRAIM HEALTH

Colloidal silver products aren't necessarily dangerous if no health claims are made. However, Ephraim Health do make strong health claims which aren't substantiated.

The following are from one product page and I expect similar claims/text are elsewhere on their site. <http://www.ephraimhealth.co.nz/itemdetails/Colloidal-Silver>

"Our Double-strength Colloidal Silver liquid can be taken orally, ... , and is so gentle it can be used on new-born babies."

"No known side-effects, ..., non-toxic, AND IT WORKS."

"Colloidal Silver has been found to destroy most types of bacteria, fungi or virus. Some bacteria are resistant to antibiotics, and also some antibiotics cause unpleasant side-effects. ... The way Colloidal Silver works is that it colloids in the bloodstream, seeks out and smothers germs totally depriving them of all sustenance, they then suffocate and die"

"Silver has antibacterial properties that work by disabling the specific enzyme that many forms of fungi, viruses, and bacteria utilize for their own metabolism."

"... help the body's immune system cope with winter colds and flu ..."

"When used as directed Colloidal Silver is suitable for the whole family, from new-born babies to the very elderly."

- They're recommending CS as an oral antibiotic which it isn't.
- They're claiming it's non-toxic and without side-effects which isn't true if used excessively.
- They're recommending its use in newborns and the elderly which increases the dangers.

Based on the FDA's strong position I question whether colloidal silver is safe to be sold in this fashion at all. However, I understand that is perhaps outside the powers of the ASA...

**The relevant provisions were Therapeutic and Health Advertising Code - Guideline 2(a), Principle 1, Principle 2.**

**The Chair** noted the Complainant's concern that the Advertiser's website contained unsubstantiated claims about the benefits of Colloidal Silver, which were misleading.

The Chair acknowledged the Advertiser had made changes to the website, removing or amending references which were of concern.

Given the Advertiser's co-operative engagement with the process and the self-regulatory action taken in amending the website, the Chair said that it would serve no further purpose to place the matter before the Complaints Board. The Chair ruled that the matter was settled.

**Chair's Ruling:** Complaint **Settled**