

COMPLAINT NUMBER	20/146
ADVERTISER	Mars NZL Ltd
ADVERTISEMENT	Pedigree, Television
DATE OF MEETING	20 April 2020
OUTCOME	No Grounds to Proceed

Advertisement: The Pedigree television advertisement for Dentastix dog treats shows a baby with its face covered with food. The father leaves the room for a cloth to clean the baby's face and returns to see the face clean and the dog licking its lips. The father says "That'll work!" and rewards the dog with a Dentastix treat. The voiceover says "Dentastix cleans so you can get closer."

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Complaint: Shows a baby in a high chair with food on its face dad goes to get washcloth comes back and baby's face clean dog licking lips And makes you think by giving a dog a dentastix its mouth is clean so ok to lick babies face

Our grandson had a mosquito bite their dog licks his face and it's resulted in bacterial infection and impetigo all over his face

Dogs mouths are full of bacteria and should not be licking a babies face this advertisement promotes that this behaviour is ok and it's not

The relevant provisions were Advertising Standards Code - Principle 1, Rule 1(h);

Principle 1: Social Responsibility: Advertisements must be prepared and placed with a due sense of social responsibility to consumers and to society.

Rule 1(e) Safety: Advertisements must not, unless justifiable on educational or social grounds, encourage or condone dangerous, illegal or unsafe practices, or portray situations which encourage or condone a disregard for safety.

Rule 1(h) Health and well-being: Advertisements must not undermine the health and well-being of individuals.

The Chair noted the Complainant's concern the advertisement is condoning the unsafe practice of allowing dogs to lick a baby's face.

In considering the issue the Chair referred to a precedent decision, Decision 17/390, which was also about a dog licking a person's face.

That decision said in part:

"The Chair acknowledged the image of the dog licking the child's neck showed a practice which was not particularly hygienic. However, unlike the sharing of food or drinks between children and young people, which had well defined public health warnings, 'dog licking' was not something on which guidance had been proffered by government agencies. The Chair said it would be up to Public Health Authorities to

provide guidance before a complaint relating to an advertisement of this nature could be upheld."

The Chair said this decision directly related to the complaint before her. The Chair said the advertisement presents a hyperbolic situation of a dog cleaning a child's dirty face, in order to suggest that this would be more palatable if the product advertised is used to improve a pet's oral health. The Chair noted the advertisement does not actually show the action of the dog licking the child's face, although she acknowledged this is alluded to.

The Chair said the use of humour and hyperbole in the advertisement meant it was unlikely to encourage or condone an unsafe practice or undermine the health of consumers.

The Chair ruled the advertisement did not reach the threshold to breach Principle 1 or Rules 1(e) and 1(h) of the Advertising Standards Code.

The Chair ruled there were no grounds for the complaint to proceed.

Chair's Ruling: Complaint **No Grounds to Proceed**

APPEAL INFORMATION

According to the procedures of the Advertising Standards Complaints Board, all decisions are able to be appealed by any party to the complaint. Information on our Appeal process is on our website www.asa.co.nz. Appeals must be made in writing via email or letter within 14 calendar days of receipt of this decision.