

Medicine Advertising

Prescription drugs, over the counter medicines, and dietary supplements are often promoted through advertisements on television, in magazines, and on the internet. Advertising is typically thought of as paid announcements that are designed to sell a product or idea.

Drug companies have found advertising to be an effective way to raise awareness of their products. For instance, research studies have shown that when prescription drugs are advertised directly to consumers (as opposed to advertising only to doctors), consumers are likely to ask their doctors about the medications. It is interesting to note that the United States and New Zealand are the only two countries where prescription medicines can be advertised directly to patients

There are different rules for advertising prescription and over-the-counter (OTC) medications. The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) oversees prescription drug advertising. There are fewer rules for OTC drug advertisements because OTC advertisements are overseen by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), not the Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

- See an example of the different parts of a prescription drug ad by reviewing **Product Claim Ad**.
<https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/PrescriptionDrugAdvertising/ucm082284.htm>
- For information about types of persuasive techniques used in ads for completing your chart, see page 1 of **Analyzing Persuasive Techniques in Advertising**.
http://www.classzone.com/cz/books/ml_lit_gr12/resources/pdfs/media_analysis/HS_1_5_Ad_Techniques2.pdf
- You can also learn more at this link about prescription drug advertising by reading **Basics of Drug Ads**
<https://www.fda.gov/Drugs/ResourcesForYou/Consumers/PrescriptionDrugAdvertising/ucm072077.htm>

The goal of this activity is to learn how to think critically about ads. You will look at differences between ads for pairs of medicine advertisements (one prescription and one over-the-counter) by completing the comparison table on the next two pages. You should be sure to focus on the differences in the information provided about prescription and over-the-counter medications, as well as messages used in the ads.

	Prescription Medicine Advertisement	Over-the-Counter (OTC) Medicine Advertisement
Name of the medicine		
Who created the advertisement?		
What is the purpose of the advertisement? Why was this advertisement made?		
Who is the audience targeted by the advertisement? Think about age, for instance.		
Who is paying for the advertisement?		

<p>What types of <u>persuasive techniques</u> are used to sell the product and get someone's attention? For instance, you might list "bandwagon" here.</p>		
<p>Do the messages appeal more to emotions or logic? Is information provided about the medication?</p>		
<p>How are the messages communicated? Do they use images, text, photos?</p>		
<p>What messages may be missing that should be there? Does the ad mention any unexpected things that can happen from using the medication?</p>		