



## High-profile fitness fads earn dubious distinctions

It is time again for the annual Slim Chance Awards, granted by the Healthy Weight Network since 1989. These awards are in anticipation of "Rid the World of Fad Diets & Gimmicks Day" that occurs on Tuesday of "Healthy Weight Week," which starts Jan. 20.

The goal of the Slim Chance Awards is to acknowledge the worst of the worst in weight-loss promotions. This can include specific products and programs or celebrities involved in product promotion.

As usual, there were plenty of candidates vying for the winning positions, but this year, Dr. Oz and three of the Kardashian sisters earned the dubious distinction that has previously been bestowed on the likes of Dr. Phil and Kevin Trudeau.

Here is a summary of this year's Slim Chance Award "winners":

» **Worst Claim:** Dr. Mehmet Oz's endorsement of a substance isolated from raspberries called raspberry ketone as "the No. 1 miracle in a bottle to burn your fat." Although there are multiple raspberry ketone products on the

market, there have been no published human studies on the safety and effectiveness of raspberry ketone taken in these concentrated forms. There is some research using laboratory rodents that indicates raspberry ketones can promote hormonal changes involved in mobilization of fat from fat cells.

So, if you have a lab rat you want to trim down, some evidence of effectiveness exists.

» **Worst Product:** QuickTrim, which includes supplements, drinks and a skin gel claimed to "detoxify and clean" the body and "burn" calories. The ingredients include a mixture of herbs and unspecified amounts of caffeine. Currently, there is a \$5 million class-action lawsuit for a variety of alleged misrepresentations in product advertisements. The suit was filed early in 2012 against the company Windmill Health Products, which makes QuickTrim. Also included in the lawsuit are various retailers of the product and promoters Kim Kardashian and her sisters Khloe and Kourtney.

» **Worst Gimmick:** An exercise gadget called the Ab Circle

Pro. Apparently the Federal Trade Commission agrees. The agency filed deceptive advertising charges against marketers of the Ab Circle Pro for its claim that exercising on the device for just three minutes a day would cause 10 pounds of weight loss in two weeks. The defendants have agreed to settlements up to \$25 million, depending on the volume of refunds requested by consumers.

» **Most Outrageous:** A popular way to advertise some products is to make the ad look like a news report. It is easy to cut and paste logos from legitimate agencies and make a report look rather "for real." These types of ads are all over the Internet.

A number of companies and individuals that used this technique to sell acai berry weight-loss pills and "colon cleansers" got slapped by the FTC for false claims. About half a dozen scammers have paid settlements with the FTC in the millions of dollars.

For more on the Slim Chance Awards, visit [www.healthyweight.net](http://www.healthyweight.net).

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