

Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) Fines VLCC Limited 3 Lakh for Misleading Fat-Loss Ads on CoolSculpting

CCPA Orders Strict Disclosure in Future Ads

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The Central Consumer Protection Authority (CCPA) has imposed a penalty of ₹3 lakh on VLCC Limited for publishing misleading advertisements regarding fat-loss and slimming treatments through the use of the US-FDA approved CoolSculpting procedure/machine.

Earlier, CCPA had also levied a penalty of ₹3 lakh on Kaya Limited for publishing misleading advertisements on CoolSculpting treatments. The company's advertisements claimed "Kaya's Non-surgical Fat Reduction" and "Kaya brings you easy inch loss with CoolSculpting," and even depicted misleading before-and-after images suggesting major fat loss all over the body. These claims went beyond the actual US-FDA approval and misrepresented the procedure as a weight-loss treatment. Kaya Limited has since complied with the CCPA's order and deposited the penalty amount.

The matter of VLCC Limited came to the notice of CCPA through a complaint and monitoring of advertisements in the slimming and beauty sector. On examination, it was found that VLCC was making exaggerated claims of drastic weight loss and inch reduction within a single session, which went far beyond the actual approval granted to the CoolSculpting machine, thereby misleading consumers.

The investigation revealed that the advertisements of VLCC projected CoolSculpting and related procedures as a permanent weight-loss and size-reduction solution. Some of the alleged claims included:

- *"Lose up to 600g and 7 cm in 1 session"*
- *"Drop 1 Size in 1 session permanently"*
- *"Drop one size in one hour"*
- *"VLCC brings you a ground-breaking fat reduction treatment"*
- *"With Lipolaser Lose 6cm and 400g in one session"*

Such advertisements gave consumers the false impression that CoolSculpting guarantees permanent and significant weight loss. In reality, the procedure is only approved for localized fat reduction in specific body areas and only for individuals with a Body Mass Index (BMI) of 30 or less.

With respect to the US-FDA approved CoolSculpting machine CCPA observed that:

- The CoolSculpting machine, manufactured by Zeltiq Aesthetics, is approved by the US-FDA only for the reduction of localized fat bulges in areas such as the upper arm, bra fat, back fat, banana roll, submental area, thigh, abdomen, and flank.
- It is not a weight-loss treatment.
- Clinical trials submitted to the US-FDA included only 57 participants of Caucasian, Hispanic, and African American ethnicity, with no Indian or Asian representation.
- The US-FDA has not given any specific endorsement for the use of CoolSculpting in India.

By omitting these critical facts, VLCC misled consumers in violation of the Consumer Protection Act, 2019.

In addition to the monetary penalty of ₹3 lakh, CCPA has directed that VLCC must strictly adhere to the

following in all its future advertisements:

A. In advertisements/disclaimers, disclose prominently:

- The specific body areas targeted for fat reduction.
- That the procedure works only for individuals with BMI of 30 or less.
- All inclusions and exclusions as per US-FDA approval.
- The demographics where the machine has been tested.

B. Clearly mention: “The CoolSculpting Procedure is used for treatment of the focal fat deposits and not weight loss” — in both advertisements and consent forms, in a clear and easily readable manner.

C. Restrict claims strictly to what has been approved by the US-FDA.

D. Inform consumers about the absence of testing on the Indian demographic and the lack of US-FDA endorsement for India before they avail of the service.

E. Discontinue unfair and prejudicial contract clauses that attempt to escape legal liability and accountability for the claims made.

CCPA further cautions all beauty clinics, wellness centers, and service providers using CoolSculpting machines in India that these directions must be followed with strict adherence. Any violation will invite stringent action under the Consumer Protection Act, 2019, including penalties, discontinuation of misleading advertisements, and legal proceedings.

This order reinforces CCPA’s commitment to protecting consumers from false, misleading, and exaggerated advertisements in the health, wellness, and beauty industry.

Consumers are advised to remain cautious and not fall prey to advertisements that promise instant weight loss or permanent size reduction through CoolSculpting.

AD/NS

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