



Media Advisory

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Teeth Whitening Offers Can Wipe the Smile Right off Your Face

Your Better Business Bureau is warning consumers to be wary of online ads offering to brighten and whiten teeth. Several bureaus throughout the country have received complaints from consumers who thought they were signing up for a free trial of teeth whitening products but instead have been billed repeatedly for products and services they didn't want.

The teeth whitener ads can be found on many trusted Web sites including FoxNews.com, CNN.com and ABCNews.com. The ads usually link consumers to phony blogs and fake news sites that are designed to look like impartial third party endorsements of the products. The consumer is then directed to a main Web site that touts: "As seen on" ABC, Forbes.com, CBS News, CNN, and USA Today. The site includes the logos of these news outlets.

The BBB has been told that while the teeth whitener ads have been placed on these news Web sites, reporters for USA Today or CNN did not write stories about the efficacy of the specific products being sold.

The countless Web sites for various teeth whitening products claim to offer free, no-risk, money back guarantee trials of the product. To sign up, customers must provide a credit or debit card number to cover shipping. However consumers are being billed before their trial ends and continue to be billed after they have told the company they want to cancel. Complainants sometimes find mystery charges for other companies and services they didn't realize they were signing up for with their "free" trial.

The BBB has identified the following companies that are behind the teeth whitening ads and Web sites:

[Dazzle White, White Smile, Teeth Smile and Dazzle Smile](#) – The BBB serving Edmonton, Canada has received 450 complaints in the last 12 months from consumers in 47 states, five Canadian provinces, and the United Kingdom, about [Dazzle White](#), [White Smile](#), [Teeth Smile](#) and [Dazzle Smile](#). Complainants report being billed as much as \$79 for the free trial and are charged for several other services—such as a weight loss program.

[Ivory White](#) – The BBB in Denver has received 611 complaints from consumers in 46 states. Consumers report they were charged as much as \$78 a month for their free trial. Complaints have also been received about [Ortho White](#) and [Bella Brite](#). All three companies have been requested to disclose their practices more clearly, yet the BBB has not received a response.

Your BBB offers the following advice to consumers making online purchases:

- **Beware of supposed third-party endorsements.** Be cautious of ads linking to blogs or Web site news articles. These have most likely been created by the company and are not unbiased endorsements of real consumers or reporters.

- **Always read the fine print.** Many Web sites offering a free trial of a teeth whitening product do not disclose the billing terms and conditions, or they do not have such details prominently displayed on their Web site. Before giving the company any credit or debit card information, review the Web site fully and be aware that free trials typically result in repeated billing.
- **Check the company out with your BBB first.** Before signing up for any free trial, review the business' Reliability Report™ online at www.bbb.org to see if the BBB has identified issues with the company.
- **File a complaint with BBB if you feel you've been ripped off.** Consumers who feel they are being deceived by a business selling teeth whitening products online can file a complaint with their BBB at www.bbb.org.

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