



## FEDERATION OF AMERICAN CONSUMERS AND TRAVELERS - NEWS RELEASE -

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Warnings Against Teeth Whitening Product Offers**

EDWARDSVILLE, IL, October 24, 2009 -The Better Business Bureau (BBB) is warning consumers to be extremely wary of pervasive online ads offering the promise of a whiter, brighter smile. BBB has received a recent onslaught of complaints from consumers who thought they were signing up for a free trial of teeth whitening products but were repeatedly billed for products and services they didn't want.

The ads typically link consumers to phony blogs and fake news sites that are designed to look like impartial third-party endorsements of the products. The phony endorsements then direct the consumer to a main Web site that claims the product sold is "as seen on" ABC, Forbes.com, CBS News, CNN, and USA Today—and includes the logos of these news outlets.

The Web sites also claim to offer a free trial of the product. To sign up, however, customers must provide a credit or debit card number to cover shipping. Complainants to BBB state that they are billed before their trial ends and continue to be billed after they have told the company they want to cancel. Complainants also may find mystery charges for other companies and services that they didn't realize they were signing up for with their "free" trial.

BBB has identified several companies that are behind the teeth whitening ads and Web sites online including:

[Dazzle White, White Smile, Teeth Smile and Dazzle Smile](#) – The BBB serving Edmonton 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 serving Denver has received 611 complaints from consumers in 46 states. Complainants say they were charged as much as \$78 a month for their free trial. Other related companies include [Ortho White](#) and [Bella Brite](#) which are mounting complaints as well. All three companies have been asked to add more disclosure to their Web sites regarding the free trial offer. The BBB has not yet received a response to these requests.

[Advanced Wellness Research](#) – The BBB serving West Palm Beach has received thousands of complaints from consumers regarding Advanced Wellness Research's acai berry supplements and has begun to receive complaints from consumers about their teeth whiteners sold under the names of Max White, My Whitening, Gleaming White Smile and many others.

BBB offers the following advice to consumers on purchasing teeth whitening products online:

- Beware of supposed third-party endorsements. Be extremely cautious of any ad that links to a blog or Web site news articles. The blogs and supposed news articles were likely created by the company and are not the unbiased endorsement 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 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 may result in repeated billing.

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This news release has been issued by the Federation of American Consumers and Travelers (FACT). FACT is a not-for-profit consumer organization, formed under the not-for-profit corporation laws of the District of Columbia in 1984. It currently serves more than 1 million consumers nationwide. Additional information on FACT may be found in the *Encyclopedia of Associations*, and by visiting the association's Web site ([www.usafact.org](http://www.usafact.org)). Informative, unbiased news bulletins are regularly disseminated by FACT to help its members remain current on matters which might seriously impact their lives. In addition to publishing consumer-related reports, the association provides more than 30 benefits for its members, ranging from [medical insurance](#) and [dental discounts](#) to [prescription drug savings](#) and [scholarships](#). FACT's administrative office is located at 318 Hillsboro Avenue, Edwardsville, IL 62025.