

Group disputes cancer claims on One A Day vitamins

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(AP) -- A consumer advocacy group on Thursday threatened to sue Bayer Healthcare if it continues to claim its One-A-Day vitamins for men reduce the risk of prostate cancer.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest says the company's ubiquitous TV and radio ads misleadingly claim that a key ingredient of One-A-Day Men's Health Formula and 50+ Advantage helps prevent cancer.

The group says a study backed by the National Institutes of Health found no evidence the ingredient selenium prevents [prostate cancer](#) in men.

"The largest prostate cancer prevention trial has found that selenium is no more effective than a placebo," said David Schardt, the group's senior nutritionist. "Bayer is ripping people off when it suggests otherwise in these dishonest ads."

Researchers halted the study of 35,000 men last October after it became clear that selenium did not prevent prostate cancer, according to the group.

Bayer said Thursday the claims on its vitamins have been approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

"We stand behind all claims made in support of our products," said Bayer spokeswoman Trisch McKernan.

Bayer's One-A-Day brand of vitamins had sales of \$191 million last year, according to the company's annual report.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest also sent a letter to the Federal Trade Commission on Thursday asking regulators to halt Bayer's marketing of the vitamins. The German conglomerate has run at least 11 television ads and 9 radio ads suggesting One-A-Day vitamins can help prevent prostate cancer, according to data from VMS advertising monitoring service.

The letter argues that Bayer's advertising violates a 2007 agreement with the FTC requiring the company to back up all claims on One-A-Day vitamins with scientific evidence. Bayer entered the agreement after paying a \$3.2 million penalty to settle claims that its advertising misled the public about the weight loss benefits of its vitamins.

A spokeswoman for the FTC said Thursday the agency has not yet received the group's letter.

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