



Health
Canada

Health Products
and Food Branch

Santé
Canada

Direction générale des produits
de santé et des aliments

Natural and Non-prescription Health Products Directorate
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██████████
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Dear ██████████

Your correspondence of April 25, 2014, concerning natural health products (NHPs), was forwarded to the Natural and Non-prescription Health Products Directorate for reply. I regret the delay in responding.

Maintaining the health and safety of Canadians is a priority for our government. Health Canada recognizes that a growing number of Canadians rely on NHPs and that many choose them to maintain and improve their health. As the regulating authority for NHPs for sale in Canada, our role is to make sure that Canadians have access to a range of NHPs that are safe, effective, and of high quality, while respecting freedom of choice as well as philosophical and cultural diversity.

Our work is guided by the understanding that NHPs are generally lower-risk products than prescription therapeutic drugs. NHPs are regulated separately from pharmaceuticals under their own specific regulations, the *Natural Health Products Regulations* (NHPR), which take into account the unique nature and properties of these products. As a result, Canadians have access to more than 80,000 NHPs (compared with about 10,000 prescription medications) and that number continues to grow.

All products approved by Health Canada will have a Drug Identification Number (DIN), a Natural Product Number (NPN), or a DIN for Homeopathic Medicine (DIN-HM) on its label. If a product bears one of these numbers, it has been assessed for its quality, safety and efficacy by Health Canada. Labels must specify the product's recommended use or purpose (health claim), dosage information, medicinal and non-medicinal ingredients and any cautions associated with the product. The absence of one of these numbers on the label of the product means that Health Canada cannot provide such an assurance. For further information regarding licensed NHPs, please consult the Licensed Natural Health Products Database (LNHPD), available on the Department's website at <http://webprod.hc-sc.gc.ca/lnhpd-bdpsnh/start-debuter.do?lang=eng>.

Health Canada considers removal of a product from the market when a safety issue arises that cannot be addressed through a product label change or other action. However, sometimes a product is no longer available because the manufacturer has decided to stop selling the product in Canada or discontinues the product entirely. This is a business decision made by the company, not Health Canada.

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