Ignore that quacking sound: Thermograms are not the new mammogram, no matter what Dr. Mercola says

By ACSH Staff — April 27, 2011

With his website ranked the 390th most popular, Dr. Joseph Mercola uses his online notoriety to tout thermograms as diagnostic screening tools for early breast cancer detection. Marketed as the Med2000, this thermogram takes digital images of skin surface temperatures using a special camera, which Dr. Mercola describes as a “revolutionary and safe diagnostic tool [that] detects hidden inflammation [and is] the newest safe cancer screening tool.” In fact, Dr. Mercola even advises women to avoid mammograms and to instead “consider thermography part of your annual health prevention regimen.”

Thankfully, the FDA has already issued a warning letter to Dr. Mercola accusing him of violating federal law by marketing the Med2000 for uses not approved by the agency, including diagnosing or screening for diseases. This is the third letter Dr. Mercola has received from the FDA since 2005, which has previously demanded that he cease selling supplements for joint problems that used non-FDA approved ingredients.

“It’s quite clear that by advertising thermography as a replacement for mammography, he’s violating FDA regulations and ethical guidelines since the efficacy of this medical technology for diagnosing breast cancer is not supported by valid studies,” says ACSH's Dr. Gilbert Ross.

Indeed both the American Cancer Society and the American Medical Association both state there is a lack of evidence proving the effectiveness of thermograms.

“He’s distracting women from getting mammograms, which have been shown to lower the risk of breast cancer death and is promoting thermograms for early breast cancer detection instead, albeit with no evidentiary support. For him to counter that the FDA does not have the authority to interfere with his practice of medicine is disingenuous at best,” adds ACSH's Dr. Elizabeth Whelan.

ACSH’s Dr. Josh Bloom notes that, “Mercola’s web page is replete with dozens of other ‘useful’ items, such as Himalayan salt lamps, organic body butter, tanning beds(!), the always-popular Chyawanprash herbal jam and the usual collection of junk you can find at ‘health food’ stores. I wonder what took the FDA so long to come down on this guy?” he ponders.