

# The real buzz on bee pollen

By ACSH Staff — June 24, 2014



A recent Internet search for bee pollen turned up over two

million hits so this is obviously a very popular substance. But why are people consuming something that is basically a food for bee larvae? Might have something to do with marketing.

Currently bee pollen is touted as a weight loss aid, a superfood, and a cure for asthma, alcoholism and on and on. Of course, there is no scientific [research](#) <sup>[1]</sup> that supports such uses. Even more concerning is the recent [advisory](#) <sup>[2]</sup> by the FDA that at least some brands of bee pollen weight loss supplements are adulterated with undeclared drugs.

The FDA pointed to fifteen brands they had tested, warning that they had been found to contain sibutramine a appetite suppressant that was withdrawn from the market because of cardiovascular concerns and/or phenolphthalein a laxative that was taken off the market in 1997 in anticipation of a ban by the FDA.

So far, the agency has received over 50 adverse event reports linked to use of the tainted weight loss products. These included at least one death, high blood pressure, allergies, and high cholesterol.

ACSH's Dr. Ruth Kava had this to say: This is just one more example of how the lax oversight of supplements has allowed a dangerous substance to be widely marketed and sold, as we've [said](#) <sup>[3]</sup> before. The 1994 Dietary Supplement Health Education Act (DSHEA) basically crippled the FDA with respect to demanding that supplements be shown to be safe before they are marketed. The take-home lesson from this FDA advisory is to leave the pollen to the bees.

ACSH's Dr. Josh Bloom wonders, Why do I get the feeling that Dr. Oz is breaking out in hives right now? Perhaps because he called it an energy booster [on his show](#) <sup>[4]</sup>? Which we all know is known for its accuracy and unbiased science.

**Source URL:** <https://www.acsh.org/news/2014/06/24/real-buzz-bee-pollen>

**Links**

[1] <http://www.webmd.com/balance/bee-pollen-benefits-and-side-effects>

[2]

<http://www.fda.gov/forconsumers/consumerupdates/ucm401676.htm#An%20Elaborate%20Marketing%20Scheme>

[3] <http://acsh.org/2014/04/dietary-supplements-law-dissed-deservedly/>

[4] <http://www.totalwellnesschoices.com/dr-oz-on-bee-pollen/>