

## Joseph Mercola and Mercola.com: Alternative ‘natural’ supplement and health merchant promotes quack cures and vaccine conspiracy theories, attacks mainstream medicine, funds organic, anti-GMO groups

**J**oseph M. Mercola, an osteopath, [claims to run](#) “the world’s No. 1 health Website” [Mercola.com](#), where he vigorously promotes and sells dietary supplements, many of which bear his name. The site, which he claims has “millions of visitors a day,” also publishes a steady stream of propaganda intended to persuade its visitors not to trust mainstream healthcare and consumer-protection agencies. Mercola uses his site, blog, and newsletter to market his books and alternative health products. He is the author of [Dr. Mercola’s Total Health Program](#), which includes recipes and lifestyle advice for preventing heart disease, losing weight and feeling younger by utilizing an alternative health plan and diet. Mercola’s reach has been greatly boosted by repeated promotion on the Dr. Oz Show. In 2017, he [claimed his net worth](#) was “in excess of \$100 million.”

Mercola endorses a long list of products and positions that stand well outside mainstream science. A news release on his website claims that physicians are the third leading cause of death in America and that traditional medicine is “responsible for killing and injuring millions of Americans every year...” He opposes immunization, fluoridation and mammography; claims that amalgam fillings are toxic; and [advises against eating](#) many foods that the scientific community regards as healthful, such as bananas, oranges, red potatoes, white potatoes, all milk products, and almost all grains [17]. He [urges](#) his followers to avoid “dangerous electro-magnetic fields,” specifically noting electric razors, all watches with batteries, automatic car door openers, alarm clocks and microwaved foods, because “natural medicine states that the introduction into the human body of molecules and energies, to which it is not accustomed, is more likely to cause harm than good ....” His alternative cures include prescribing “organic, non-commercially harvested” seaweed supplements to treat thyroid problems.

Mercola is one of the leading proponents of vaccine denialism and, more recently, spreading numerous conspiracy theories linked to COVID-19. Mercola writes on his website that measles “continues to be a [Trojan Horse](#) for increasing vaccine mandates.” A page removed in 2020 claimed that “vitamin C supplementation is a viable option for measles prevention.” A page about [vitamin D](#) includes the headline, “Avoid Flu Shots With the One Vitamin that Will Stop Flu in Its Tracks.” The [Wall Street Journal reported](#) in 2020 that Mercola has contributed more than \$2.9 million, accounting for about 40% of funding, to the nation’s [oldest anti-vaccine advocacy](#) group, the National Vaccine Information Center.

The [New York Times](#) calls [Mercola](#) “the most influential spreader of coronavirus misinformation online.” Mercola claims that many of his supplement products can boost immunity to COVID-19. He has written numerous articles claiming that masks cause “oxygen deprivation” and that the mainstream recommendation for mask-wearing “[has nothing to do with decreasing the spread of the virus, but more to indoctrinate you into submission.](#)” He also encourages “civil disobedience” in areas where mask-wearing is mandated. According to the [Center for Science in the Public Interest](#), Mercola “falsely claims that at least 23 vitamins, supplements, and other products available for sale on his web site can prevent, treat, or cure COVID-19 infection.” In July 2020, CSPI sent a letter and documents to the FDA and FTC urging the agencies to bring enforcement proceedings against Mercola for false COVID-19 health claims.

While Mercola’s website [Mercola.com](#) is one of the largest “alternative health” news sources on the internet, it is also an online store that has been fined or warned several times by the [FDA](#) and FTC for the promotion of dubious cures. In February 2017, as part of a [settlement](#) with the FTC, Mercola was forced to refund “\$2.59 million to more than 1,300 people who bought Mercola indoor tanning systems,” which he had claimed on his website did not increase the risk of melanoma skin cancer but did reduce the effects of aging.

Mercola was [banned from Pinterest](#) in November 2018 for “promoting misinformation that has immediate and detrimental effects on a pinner’s health or on public safety — like promotion of false cures for terminal or chronic illnesses and anti-vaccination advice or associating vaccinations with autism.” Google downgraded his site in search in June 2019, causing what [Mercola claimed](#) was a 99% drop in traffic. He was banned from Facebook and Twitter in January 2020 for offering medical guidance that both social media sites viewed as potentially dangerous. Both accounts were subsequently restored. Their Twitter accounts are active, too. Facebook banned misinformation on all vaccines [in February 2021](#), although the pages of both Mercola and another leading anti-vax campaigner, Joseph F. Kennedy, Jr., remain up on the social media site. Mercola has posted more than 600 articles on Facebook that cast doubt on COVID-19 vaccines since the pandemic began. [YouTube banned](#) Mercola’s vaccine denialism posts in September 2021.

The nonprofit Center for Countering Digital Hate lists Mercola as the number one purveyor of anti-vaccine messaging in its “Disinformation Dozen,” [a list of 12 people](#) responsible for sharing 65 percent of all anti-vax messaging on social media

## Career

Joseph Mercola, D.O., is an osteopathic physician, health activist and entrepreneur practicing near Chicago. He is the author of two New York Times best-sellers, [The No-Grain Diet](#) (with Alison Rose Levy) and [The Great Bird Flu Hoax](#), as well as several other alternative health, diet and lifestyle books. He is best known as founder and editor of the popular Web site, [Mercola.com](#), which advocates organic dietary and homeopathic lifestyle approaches to health. He criticizes many mainstream medical practices, particularly vaccination and the use of prescription drugs and surgery, and is a vocal opponent of the Food and Drug Administration ([FDA](#)).

Mercola promotes and sells a variety of “alternative” products, for which he has received multiple warning letters from the FDA “for marketing nutritional products in a manner which violated the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.” He is a member of the politically conservative [Association of American Physicians and Surgeons](#), as well as several alternative medicine-related organizations.

Education:[\[1\]](#)

- University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign 1972 -1976
- Chicago College of Osteopathic Medicine (now Midwestern University) 1978 -1982
- Chicago Osteopathic Hospital 1982-1985 Family Practice Residency. Chief resident 1984 – 1985
- Board Certified American College Osteopathic General Practitioners July 1985
- State of Illinois Licensed Physician and Surgeon

Illinois Secretary of State REPORTS for Mercola-business interests:

- **Entity Name MERCOLA.COM HEALTH RESOURCES, LLC**, File Number 02420953, Status ACTIVE On 12/10/2012, Entity Type LLC, Type of LLC Foreign, File Date 12/20/2007, Jurisdiction DE, Agent Name CHRISTOPHER M PORTERA, Principal Office 3200 W. HIGGINS RD. HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL 60169, Duration PERPETUAL, Annual Report Filing Date 00/00/0000 For Year 2013
- **Entity Name MERCOLA.COM, LLC**, File Number 01771914, Status ACTIVE On 01/15/2013, Entity Type LLC, Type of LLC Foreign, File Date 02/27/2006, Jurisdiction NV, Agent Name CHRISTOPHER M PROTERA, Principal Office, 3200 W. HIGGINS RD HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL 60169, Duration PERPETUAL, Annual Report Filing Date 01/15/2013 For Year 2013
- **Entity Name MERCOLA CONSULTING SERVICES, LLC**, File Number 03090094, Status ACTIVE On 03/08/2013, Entity Type LLC, Type of LLC Domestic, File Date 03/05/2009, Jurisdiction IL, Agent Name DANIEL PATRICK HOGAN, Principal Office 3200 W. HIGGINS RD. HOFFMAN ESTATES, IL 601690000, Duration PERPETUAL, Annual Report Filing Date 03/08/2013 For Year 2013
- **Entity Name MERCOLA HEALTHY SKIN, LLC**, File Number 02516659, Status VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION On 04/30/2009, Entity Type LLC, Type of LLC Domestic, File Date 05/01/2008, Jurisdiction, IL Agent Name ANDREW G LOGAN, Principal Office 1443 W SCHAUMBURG RD STE 250, SCHAUMBURG, IL 60194, Duration PERPETUAL, Annual Report Filing Date 00/00/0000 For Year 2009
- **Entity Name MERCOLA MANAGED CAPITAL, LLC**, File Number 01082116, Status WITHDRAWN On 11/26/2008, Entity Type LLC, Type of LLC Foreign, File Date 12/29/2003, Jurisdiction DE, Agent Name ANDREW G. LOGAN, Principal Office 1443 W. SCHAUMBURG RD., 250, SCHAUMBURG, IL 60194, Duration PERPETUAL, Annual Report Filing Date 00/00/0000 For Year 2008
- **Entity Name JOSEPH M. MERCOLA, D.O., S.C.**, File Number 56062475, Status DISSOLVED, Entity Type CORPORATION, Type of Corp DOMESTIC BCA, Incorporation Date (Domestic) 08/07/1990 State ILLINOIS, Agent Name CHRISTOPHER M PORTERA, President Name & Address JOSEPH M MERCOLA 3200 W HIGGINS ROAD HOFFMAN ESTATES 60169, Secretary Name & Address (none), VOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION 07/31/2013, Duration Date PERPETUAL, Annual Report Filing Date 00/00/0000 For Year 2013, Assumed Name INACTIVE – OPTIMAL WELLNESS CENTER, INACTIVE – NATURAL HEALTH CENTER

- **Entity Name NATURAL HEALTH RESEARCH FOUNDATION, INC.**, File Number 64982079, Status ACTIVE, Entity Type CORPORATION, Type of Corp NOT-FOR-PROFIT, Incorporation Date (Domestic) 06/22/2009 State ILLINOIS, Agent Name CHRISTOPHER M PORTERA, President Name & Address (none) Secretary Name & Address (none), Duration Date PERPETUAL, Annual Report Filing Date 05/14/2013 For Year 2013
- **Entity Name OPTIMAL WELLNESS, INC.**, File Number 65132257, Status DISSOLVED, INVOLUNTARY DISSOLUTION 02/11/2010 (may be unrelated)

## Optimal Wellness Center

Joseph M Mercola, DO/TTEE

3200 West Higgins Road, Hoffman Estates, IL 60169  
 Phone: (847)252-4355 or (877) 985-2695  
 email: jm@mercola.com

Mercola's "natural wellness" center claims: "Between 1985 and 2013, Dr. Mercola has treated more than 20,000 patients at his clinic."[\[2\]](#)

## **Mercola.com**

Mercola.com is the flagship for Joe Mercola's online broad-based alternative health product marketing efforts for which Hoovers Dunn & Bradstreet estimates has \$4.5 million in annual sales.[\[3\]](#) Mercola publishes daily risk-based attacks through heavily syndicated "news" blogs which are frequently tied to his "safe" product alternatives. Hundreds of products are offered for sale under the Mercola brand, ranging from nutraceutical supplements promoted as cures for various diseases to vitality tanning beds and air and water filters. He sells pet products, organic foods, personal care, fitness, household goods and more. [\[4\]](#) Mercola operates various subsidiary groups and LLCs affiliated with Mercola.com including Mercola Health Exports, LLC and the Center for Natural Health, LTD.

His websites[\[5\]](#) include:

- MercolaHealthyPet.com
- MercolaHealthyPets.com
- MercolaHealthySkin.com
- MercolaBioThin.com
- Natural-health-center.com
- RightToKnowGMOs.org
- SaveOurSupplements.us
- ToxicTeeth.org

A June 2009 Mercola video entitled "Why I sell Products on My Web Site" reflects on 12 years of online marketing in which he states:

- Invested \$500,000 of his own money into Mercola.com during its first three years
- Spends “six figures” in legal fees to defend himself against numerous continual “frivolous” lawsuits by major corporations
- Runs clinics outside of Chicago
- Employs more than 100 staff including researchers, editors, IT personnel and customer service reps.
- He or “his family” uses all the products he sells.
- Claims he has no outside investors.

## Advocacy

Mercola appears to mix his for-profit endeavors with his non-profit 501c3 Foundation(s). His 501c3's only named reported income is from Mercola.com, LLC – the for profit arm of Dr. Mercola's Natural Health Clinic. Joe Mercola is the only named officer/trustee for his foundation(s) and his for-profit natural health clinic. Since its official founding in 2006 as an IRS 501c3 non-profit organization, The Mercola Foundation received donations from – and only from – Mercola.com, LLC (\$271,003 – 2005 = 100% of all contributions; \$525,293 – 2006 = 100% of contributions; and, \$8,375 – 2007 = 78% of all contributions, remainder from MHR Management, also a Mercola holding). Subsequently Mercola formed the Natural Health Research Foundation through which he has similarly funneled millions in Mercola.com profits to advocacy causes which benefit his business.

Affiliated organizations:

- MHR Management Co
- Mercola Foundation – 501c3 non-profit run solely by Mercola. The Mercola Foundation was liquidated in 2009, transferring all remaining assets to Mercola's Natural Health Research Foundation.
- Natural Health Research Foundation (NHRF) – 501c3 is also run solely by Mercola and Mercola.com is the sole contributor (EIN: 22-3936343, ruling year 2007). In 2008 Mercola transferred nearly \$700,000 from the Mercola Foundation to NHRF as an unrestricted grant.<sup>[6]</sup> IN 2012 Mercola.com “contributed” nearly \$1 million to NHRF. NHRF then distributed that money to various causes supported by Mercola including:
  - Organic Consumers Association \$505,000 (25 percent of budget)
  - National Vaccine Information Center \$300,000 (34 percent of budget)
  - Consumer for Dental Choice \$103,000 (34 percent of budget)
  - Institute for Responsible Technology ([Jeffrey M. Smith](#)) \$10,000 (Mercola is an annual contributor to Smith's IFRT campaigns.)
  - American Environmental Health Studies PR (Canton, NY) \$10,000
  - Citizens for Health ([James Turner](#)) \$2,500
  - Mercola's Natural Health Clinic, Mercola.com LLC – for profit private corporation run solely by Mercola
  - Bright Hope International (Hoffman Estates, IL) – evangelical NGO to which Mercola foundation directs unrestricted grants

- Foundation for Health Choice (Washington, DC) – an alternative health advocacy group to which Mercola directs unrestricted grants. Mercola content is cross-linked with FHC and vice-a-versa.

## Right to Know GMOs

Mercola runs the “[Right to Know GMO](#)” website registered through a privacy domain registration service but hosted on Mercola.com’s dedicated servers and programmed using the Mercola.com website HTML templates. The campaign demands transparency and the inclusion of warning labels on foods containing GMOs; however, nowhere on the the GMO Right to Know site is Mercola’s involvement or his benefiting business selling non-GMO foods and products noted. Mercola contributed more than \$1.1 million to the California GMO labeling campaign in 2012 and was one of their largest individual financial supporters.<sup>[7]</sup>

## Consumers for Dental Choice

Like GMO Right to Know, Mercola hosts [ToxicTeeth.org](#), the website for the “Consumers for Dental Choice” a “non-profit” organization housed within the Turner & Swankin Law Firm in Washington, DC<sup>[8]</sup> that lobbies against the use of mercury amalgam fillings. The Consumers for Dental Choice uses numerous references to Mercola articles attacking conventional dentistry and the use of mercury fillings, but makes no reference to Mercola’s hosting of the group’s website. The organization is affiliated with the law firm of Turner & Swankin and supplements and alternative health industry lawyer and lobbyist James Turner; however, like GMO Right to Know, none of the organization’s formal 501c3 tax filings nor the website disclose either the Mercola or Turner relationship.

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Founded in 1996 Consumers for Dental Choice is a formally registered 501c3 (EIN:52-2257385; ruling year 2005) with an annual listed budget of approximately \$400,000 (2011) one-quarter to one-third of which is contributed directly by Joe Mercola annually. The group is led by Charles “Charlie” Brown (Washington, DC) and claims to be an initiative of the “World Alliance for Mercury-free Dentistry” led by Silvia Dove (Washington, DC), Dominique Bally (Abidjan, Cote d’Ivoire), Shahriar Hossain (Dhaka, Qatar) and Maria Carcamo (Montevideo). Their listed campaign NGO allies include the Pesticide Action Network, Physicians for Social Responsibility, Consumers Association of Penang (Third World Network), Friends of the Earth, and Citizens for Health (led by Jim Turner).<sup>[9]</sup> Other directors listed with CDC include: Al Blackman, Mark A. Breiner, Patrick Sullivan, Jr., Ward Eccles, Johann Wehrle, Sue Ann Taylore, and Charles Brown.

## Drugs and supplements

Mercola opposes the use of most prescription drugs and immunizations, favoring better food choices, especially unprocessed, organic produce and elimination of most sugar and grains from our diet; lifestyle modifications, especially regular exercise, better sleep, and removing household toxins from cleaning



supplies and cosmetics, and energy psychology tools to address emotional challenges. He promotes and sells numerous dietary supplements, including krill oil, vitamin K, probiotics, and anti-oxidant supplements. Mercola is especially critical of new drugs, as well as of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.[\[10\]](#)

## **Save our Supplements**

Mercola hosted and was openly affiliated with the Save our Supplements federal lobbying campaign, which sought to block a proposal by U.S. Senator Richard Durbin requiring more transparent ingredient labeling and health disclosures and enhanced regulatory oversight for dietary and herbal supplements. The campaign was “supported by Mercola.com, Natural Products Association ([NPA](#)), the Council for Responsible Nutrition (CRN), and the American Herbal Products Association (AHPA), as well as the dietary supplement industry – including suppliers and retailers – and other natural health associations, such as the consumer advocacy organization Alliance for Natural Health-USA.”[\[11\]](#)

## **Vaccinations**

Mercola has been highly critical of vaccines and vaccination policy, claiming that too many vaccines are used too soon during infancy.[\[12\]](#) Mercola has stated that public health officials responsible for local vaccination programs “should be prosecuted for conspiracy to commit murder.”[\[13\]](#)

He hosts vaccine critics on his website, advocates preventive measures rather than vaccination in many cases, and strongly criticizes influenza vaccines. Mercola is a member with the National Vaccine Information Center ([NVIC](#)) which lobbies to oppose mandatory vaccination of children[\[14\]](#) and assists those “who have been vaccine injured.”[\[15\]](#) NVIC is partnered with another anti-vaccine organization led by vaccine malpractice and personal injury attorney James Turner called the Foundation for Health Choice, whose board members are noted contributing writers to Mercola.com. Through his 501c3 Natural Health Research Foundation, 100 percent funded by Mercola.com, Mercola contributes more than 1/3 NVIC’s annual budget covering 100 percent of their annual political lobbying and public education budget costs.

Mercola argues that thimerosal, previously widely used as a vaccine preservative, is harmful.[\[16\]\[17\]](#) Thimerosal is no longer present in most vaccines given to young children in the USA, though it is still present in some vaccines approved for adults. Extensive evidence has accumulated since 1999 showing that this preservative is safe,[\[18\]](#) with the World Health Organization stating in 2006 that “there is no evidence of toxicity in infants, children or adults exposed to thiomersal in vaccines”.[\[18\]](#)

In his book *The Great Bird Flu Hoax*,[\[20\]](#) Mercola appears to take a stronger anti-pharmaceutical industry stance by accusing them of a fear-mongering marketing campaign against the public. In supporting this stance, Mercola often has wholly critical views of those working in governmental health care, as well as towards international health organizations. He argues at length that concern over swine flu and the resulting immunizations were actually false alarms put forth to terrify the public. The World Health Organization reported that by August 1, 2010, about 18,500 deaths were caused by the Influenza A virus H1N1 pandemic influenza.[\[21\]](#)

He emerged as a leading critic of vaccines during the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Food consumption

Mercola advocates an organic diet consisting mostly of unprocessed foods. He sees value in paleolithic diets and advocates metabolic typing, and is a proponent of vegetable juicing. Mercola argues fervently against over-consumption of sugar, especially high-fructose corn syrup, which is the predominant sweetener of many commercial sodas and soft drinks, and processed flour and grains, which the body rapidly converts into sugar. He has also been an advocate of increasing the consumption of Omega-3 fats and of strategies to greatly increase blood levels of Cholecalciferol|Vitamin D<sub>3</sub>.

Mercola's dietary recommendations often put him at odds with mainstream dietary advice. Mercola encourages the ingestion of unprocessed saturated fats, including unrefined coconut oil in place of polyunsaturated fats such as vegetable, corn, soy, safflower, sunflower and canola oils.[\[22\]](#)

## Food preparation

Mercola's website has called microwave ovens dangerous, claiming both that they emit dangerous radiation and that microwaving food alters its chemistry.[\[23\]\[24\]](#) In contrast, academic reviews have concluded that "no significant nutritional differences exist between foods prepared by conventional and microwave methods." Other studies have suggested that food cooked in microwave ovens can be more nutritious than conventionally cooked food. The *Harvard Medical School Family Health Guide* states that "as a general proposition, cooking with a microwave probably does a better job of preserving the nutrient content of foods because the cooking times are shorter."

Mercola is also against homogenization,[\[25\]](#) claiming that it leads to xanthine oxidase absorption and oxidative stress.[\[26\]](#) This idea has been described as "tenuous and implausible" in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. A review published in the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition* concluded that "Experimental evidence has failed to substantiate, and in many cases has refuted, the xanthine oxidase/plasmalogen depletion hypothesis".

## HIV and AIDS

Mercola has questioned whether HIV is the cause of AIDS. He has argued instead that the manifestations of AIDS (including opportunistic infections and death) may be the result of "psychological stress" brought



on by the belief that HIV is harmful.[\[27\]](#) Mercola.com has featured positive presentations of the claims of AIDS denialism, a fringe group which denies the existence of AIDS and/or the role of HIV in causing it.[\[28\]](#)  
[\[29\]](#)

The scientific community considers the evidence that HIV causes AIDS to be conclusive[\[30\]](#)[\[31\]](#) and rejects AIDS-denialist claims as pseudoscience based on conspiracy theories, faulty reasoning, cherry picking (fallacy), and misrepresentation of mainly outdated scientific data.[\[32\]](#)

## Sunscreen

Mercola has also claimed that the use of many commercial brands of sunscreen actually increases, not decreases, the likelihood of contracting skin cancer with high UV exposure. He advocates the use of “natural” sunscreens, some of which he markets on his website.[\[33\]](#) This view is not held by mainstream medical science; in 2011, the [National Toxicology Program](#) stated that “Protection against photodamage by use of broad-spectrum sunscreens is well-documented as an effective means of reducing total lifetime UV dose and, thereby, preventing or ameliorating the effects of UV radiation on both the appearance and biomechanical properties of the skin”.[\[34\]](#)

## COVID-19

As the novel coronavirus began to spread around the world, Mercola took the opportunity to promote his supplement business. Mercola.com lists 22 vitamins, supplements and other products for sale, and claims they prevent, treat or cure COVID-19 infections. However, [according to complaints filed](#) by the Center for Science in the Public Interest (CSPI) in July 2020, there is no evidence any of these products are effective against COVID-19.

During testimony given to a Senate subcommittee, CSPI policy director Laura MacCleery told lawmakers:

On a recent episode of Mercola’s podcast, he actually advises consumers to take the [immunity-](#)boosting supplements he sells and then attempt to contract the COVID-19 virus deliberately because his [supplements](#) will allegedly reduce their symptoms. Even with all my experience investigating supplement scams, this reckless self-promotion and endangerment of the public took my breath away.

Steve Rye, CEO of Mercola Health Resources, claimed the recommendations are based on studies published in peer-reviewed journals, though he didn’t address MacCleery’s testimony that these studies are either deficient or non-existent. Rye added:

Even [Dr. Anthony] Fauci has said this virus will not be eradicated, which leaves you with two options, optimize your metabolic function and immune system or trust a fast tracked [coronavirus vaccine](#). It is inevitable, you will be exposed to coronavirus and now is the time to protect yourself.

There is no evidence [that supplements](#) “optimize your metabolic function and immune system,” but plenty of research showing they range from useless to harmful.

“Can you boost your immune system?” [asks infectious disease expert Mark Crislip](#). “Sure, with a vaccine. That’s about it.”

In a separate analysis, the American Council on Science and Health (ACSH) [challenged](#) Mercola’s [Top Tips to Help Combat Coronavirus](#). ACSH found that seven of the 11 recommendations are either dubious or outright false. The remaining four—wash your hands, get adequate exercise and sleep and stay hydrated—are general health tips with no particular relevance to COVID-19.

## Criticisms

Mercola has been the subject of criticism from some business, regulatory, medical and scientific communities. A 2006 *BusinessWeek* editorial criticized Mercola’s marketing practices as “relying on slick promotion, clever use of information, and scare tactics.”[\[35\]](#) In 2005, 2006, and 2011, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned Mercola and his company to stop making illegal claims regarding his products’ ability to detect, prevent and treat disease.[\[36\]](#) The medical watchdog site Quackwatch has criticized Mercola for making “unsubstantiated claims and clash with those of leading medical and public health organizations making many unsubstantiated recommendations for dietary supplements.”[\[36\]](#)

- [Joe Mercola 15 years of promoting quackery](#) Science Blogs, August 2012.
- [For Shame](#) Science Based Medicine, January 2011.
- [Mercola: Visionary or quack?](#), Chicago Magazine, January 2012.
- Phyllis Entis, a microbiologist and food safety expert, highlighted Mercola.com as an example of websites “likely to mislead consumers by offering one-sided, incomplete, inaccurate, or misleading information.”[\[38\]](#)
- [Nine Reasons to Completely Ignore Joseph Mercola](#), by Joseph Albiets, Science Based Medicine, October 16, 2009.

## Government Warning Letters & Complaints

Mercola has also received multiple Warning letters from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for violations of U.S. marketing laws, and the Illinois Department of Professional Regulation filed complaints against Mercola, calling for the revocation of his medical and business licenses for publishing false and harmful medical advice online and sales and delivery of potentially dangerous “health” services and “medical” tests by unaccredited staff.[\[39\]](#)

The first FDA letters, dated 2005 and 2006,[\[40\]](#)[\[41\]](#) charged Mercola with making false and misleading claims regarding the marketing of several natural supplemental products, which violated the Federal Food Drug and Cosmetic Act.[\[42\]](#) In a more recent letter, sent in March 2011,[\[43\]](#) Mercola was accused of violating federal law, by making claims about the efficacy of certain uses of a telethermographic camera exceeding those approved by the FDA concerning the diagnostic and therapeutic potential of the device (regulation of such claims being within the purview of the FDA). Dr. Mercola has challenged the FDA’s order stating that “We believe that the FDA’s warning letter is without merit and is an attempt to regulate the practice of medicine, which the agency does not have the regulatory authority to do. Our use of the thermography device is consistent with its 510(k) clearance for use by health care professionals in their diagnosis and treatment of patients.”

Mercola Warning Letters related to his health advocacy activities:

- 02/16/2005 – Living Fuel RX(TM) and Coconut Oil Products – For marketing products for a medical use which classifies those products as drugs in violation of 201(g)(1) of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act.[\[44\]](#)
- 09/21/2006 – Optimal Wellness Center – For both labeling / marketing health supplements for purposes which would render them to be classified as regulated drugs as well failing to provide adequate directions for use upon the label in the event that they were legally sold as drugs.[\[45\]](#)
- 03/11/2011 – Re: Meditherm Med2000 Infrared cameras – For marketing a telethermographic camera for medical purposes which have not been FDA approved.[\[46\]](#)
- 12/16/2011 – Milk Specialties Global – Wautoma – Failure to have tested for purity, strength, identity, and composition “Dr. Mercola Vitamin K2” and others.[\[47\]](#)

## Litigation

- Mercola claims he spends millions on legal fees and he is named in several federal suits:
- Case: 6:11-cv-00662-LED DBG Group Investments, LLC et al v. Johnston et al (Joseph Mercola & Mercola Health Resources, LLC defendants) for patent infringement
- Case: 2:09-cv-02632-WJM-CCC QUEST DIAGNOSTICS INCORPORATED v. MERCOLA for unfair business competition, defamation, libel and commercial disparagement
- Case: 1:05-cv-04400 Mercola v. Department of Financial and Professional Regulation et al (Civil Rights Case seeking relief from the State of Illinois’ DFPR disciplinary actions against Mercola.com in IDFPR v. Mercola No. 2001-04904-1 for “publishing false and potentially harmful advice on the website entitled Mercola.com”)
- Case: 1:06-cv-04851 Stevens v. Mercola et al (discrimination, sexual harassment and assault claims

suit)

- Case: 1:08-cv-06614-LAP Corbis Corporation v. Mercola.Com, LLC (copyright infringement)
- Case: 1:05-cv-07036 Mercola.Com, LLC v. Hull (copyright infringement)
- Case: 1:13-cv-00341-GMS Neptune Technologies & Bioresources Inc. v. Enzymotec Ltd. et al (Mercola.com Health Resources, LLC defendant, patent infringement)

## Personal

According to personal statements on his website, the trauma of divorce (due to a lack of his own maturity) motivated him to “pursue a healing path focusing on the integration of bioenergy emotional resolutions with nutrition.” Mercola adds, that “as a Christian since 1990... God did use the personal tragedy (of his divorce) as a major blessing to develop many of my strategies for helping patients recover from chronic illness.”

Mercola purchased a \$2 million lakefront home in South Barrington, Illinois in 2006.<sup>[48]</sup> He is described as a private person.

## Bibliography

- [Joe Mercola on LinkedIn](#)
- [Joe Mercola's Facebook profile](#)
- [Joe Mercola on Twitter](#)
- [Mercola on Flickr](#)

## References

- [1 My Education, from mercola.com](#)
- [2 http://www.natural-health-center.com/](#)
- [3 http://www.hoovers.com/company-information/company-search.html?term=mercola](#)
- [4 http://products.mercola.com/](#)
- [5 Reverse IP Lookup Results — 6 domains hosted on IP address 199.66.166.16 \(dedicated server for Mercola.com\)](#)
- [6 Mercola Foundation IRS 990 tax filing 2008.](#)
- [7 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2012/11/02/prop-37-donors-revealed-f\\_n\\_2065789.html](#)
- [8 http://www.swankin-turner.com/projects.html](#)
- [9 http://www.toxicteeth.org/letter-with-62-ngos-40-nations.aspx](#)
- [10 FDA is “Virtually Incapable of Protecting You From Unsafe Drugs”, mercola.com](#)
- [11 http://saveoursupplements.us/about-us.aspx](#)
- [12 A User-Friendly Vaccination Schedule, Mercola.com, December 2004](#)
- [13 http://www.mercola.com/200/nov19/vaccinesids.htm](#)
- [14 http://www.nvic.org/Doctors-Corner/Dr-Joseph-Mercola.aspx](#)
- [15 NVIC IRS form 990 organization program description.](#)

- [16](#) [How the Mercury in Vaccines Can Kill Your Baby, J. Mercola](#)
- [17](#) [Proof That Thimerosal Induces Autism-Like Neurotoxicity](#), J. Mercola
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