

## Social media ads on pharma products in UAE now need health ministry nod

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Ads on health, medical equipment, pharmaceutical products and all other health related issues on social media need approval from the MoHAP.

Individuals and firms running ads about health or medical products on social media platforms in the UAE need approval from the Ministry of Health and Prevention (MoHAP), according to the new rules.

According to the guidelines for electronic advertisements on social media which were issued by the National Media Council (NMC) on Wednesday, social media influencers and firms have to get permission from the NMC to run commercial ads on their platforms.

The rules are in implementation of regulations governing electronic media that were issued in 2017 by the UAE Cabinet, said the circular issued by the NMC.

According to the guidelines, to carry adverts about health, medical equipment, pharmaceutical products and all other health related issues on social media, one must get permission from the MoHAP.

The health ads should conform to the electronic advertisement guidelines on social media and all information in the ads must be correct and there should be no errors in the names or other specifications about the products.

All those who carry out advertising activities on a commercial basis are required to obtain a prior license from the council, with the account holder being the primary person responsible for the content of the account in question.

The guidelines stresses that advertisements must not be vague, ambiguous or unclear, should not contain false or misleading claims, should not use falsified images, should not exaggerate the product or service being advertised, should not lead to confusion with other names, products or activities and should not violate the existing standards relating to media content and classification.

The advertisement's identity should be transparently defined and should incorporate the use of clear and non-confusing language.

The advertisement should appear distinctive and independent from editorial, media and any other material.

Firms and individuals that will not comply with the advertising rules will be fined.

In 2018, the NMC issued rules requiring news websites, electronic publishing outlets and social media influencers to register and get operation licenses.

The rules require influencers and media websites to obtain an e-media license, with a starting price of Dh15,000 and a trade licence, which varies in cost depending on free zone or mainland category. The licence has to be renewed annually. The rules apply to only social media influencers that use their blogs, pages or accounts for advertising and promoting brands for money.

Social media influencers making advertisements and promoting brands for cash are required to have a trade license first before registering with the NMC for an e-media licence.

Social media influencers caught operating without licenses are fined Dh5,000 and their accounts are shut down.

**Tags:** National Media Council, Ministry of Health and Prevention, advertisement, UAE, Social Media, pharma