

Press Note

Order passed by Food and Drug Administration, Maharashtra State, S.No.341, Bandra-Kurla Complex, Bandra(E), Mumbai-51. In the matter of Johnson & Johnson Ltd., Baby Cosmetics Product.

The events leading to the investigation into the “Baby Products” manufactured by M/s. Johnson and Johnson Ltd. was triggered by a complaint received from Amravati a district head quarter town in the State of Maharashtra.

The complainant alleged that, he had purchased Johnson Baby Oil, B.No. B.M.3161, D/M-Oct. 2003 for his child. The Baby Oil was massaged by the complainant on the baby. The baby then developed big blisters. The complainant stopped the use of the said of baby oil on medical advise and thereafter the blisters were subsided. The complainant lodged a complaint with Johnson and Johnson Ltd. and F.D.A. Maharashtra.

As a part of regulatory responsibility FDA Maharashtra investigated the complaint by collecting information from Johnson and Johnson Ltd, all the data relating to the product composition, method of manufacturing, method of testing, redressal of public complaints in respect of Johnson’s Baby Oil.

The Baby Oil manufactured by Johnson and Johnson Ltd. is with the following composition.

- i) Mineral Oil 99.785 %
- ii) Tocopheryl acetate 0.1%
- iii) Vit. A & D3 mixture 0.1%
- iv) Perfume 0.015%

The formula shows that, Johnson’s Baby Oil is almost totally Light Liquid Paraffin to the extent of 99.785% (the company had not even mentioned L.L.P. on the label). Which is a well documented emollient to be applied for rashes, itching and to prevent dryness as a moisturizer.

Johnson Baby Oil makes the following label claims.

- a) Vitamin D enriched.
- b) It is the ideal massage oil for your baby. Daily massage has clinically shown to benefit overall growth and development.

Buying behavior of the “Baby Products” shows that young parents believe the Baby Oil is a Massage Oil in view of the heavy advertisements made by the manufacturers in the Electronic Media and Print Media. The claims of the Johnson’s Baby Oil as a Massage Oil therefore needed to be investigated further for the truthfulness of their claim. FDA Maharashtra also decided to investigate other Johnson Baby products alongwith “Johnson Baby Oil” for the label claims.

A Show Cause Notice was issued to M/s. Johnson and Johnson on 15th March 2005 in respect of all the Baby Products manufactured by them and to justify their claim as Baby products and safety aspect of them to infants and children and various claims made on them.

FDA Maharashtra State, heard the oral and written submission made by M/s. Johnson and Johnson. Ltd. and examined in detail the submissions filed by M/s. Johnson and Johnson in respect of the label claims of all the Baby Products and also on the quality of the products perse.

M/s. Johnson and Johnson Ltd., had received 39 complaints in respect of Johnson's Baby Oil from the consumers for the period of 14 months from January 2004 to February 2005.

FDA Maharashtra do not have any apprehensions about the quality of the products however they are misbranding under Section 17C (c) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act, 1940 which reads as under.....

“ 17C – Misbranded cosmetics – For the purposes of this Chapter a cosmetics shall be deemed to be misbranded,-

(c) – if the label or container or anything accompanying the cosmetic bears any statement which is false or misleading in any particular.”

FDA Maharashtra raised the following questions to M/s. Johnson and Johnson during the oral hearing.

- 1) As in the case of the infant food why not list all ingredients alongwith their percentage and appropriate caution and side effects as required to be mentioned on the label so that customer can make informed decision for buying “Baby Products”
- 2) Justify that the claims made on “Baby Products” are not in conflict with established tradition in our country regarding the use of traditional baby products.
- 3) In India the labeling standards are not prescribed in detail and hence why not follow the labeling guidelines issued by U.S. FDA.

M/s. Johnson and Johnson gave written replies and made oral submissions alongwith supporting data in respect of above.

FDA, Maharashtra had examined the company's submissions, perused the reference texts on Cosmetology (Harry's Cosmetology and Cosmetics Science and Technology edited by Balson and Sagarin) and also aware of the tradition and practices followed in India in respect of various baby product further supported by the Ayurvedic Texts, and in the light of these information findings in respect of the truthfulness of the claims under Section 17C (c) for the “Baby Products” manufactured by M/s. Johnson and Johnson are as under.

1) Johnson's Baby Oil claims as under.

a) Vitamin D enriched.

b) It is ideal massage oil for your baby. Daily massage has clinically shown to benefit over all Growth and Development.

a) In respect of Vitamin D3 it is present to the extent of 0.1% in the total formulation alongwith Vitamin A. However the benefits accruing to babies by absorption of Vitamin D from such low concentration of Vitamin D present in the Baby Oil is not established. So FDA Maharashtra do not consider this label claim as substantiated by M/s. Johnson and Johnson.

b) The most important claim of the Johnson Baby Oil relates to the claim no.(b)
(It is ideal massage oil for your baby. Daily massage has clinically shown to benefit over all Growth and Development.)

FDA, Maharashtra do not agree with the submissions made by M/s. Johnson and Johnson substantiating their above claims of Johnson Baby Oil because,

(i) Baby Oils are preparations for cleansing the skin. “They act by forming a thin film protecting the skin against wetting and chaffing. Light Liquid Paraffin is universally recognised as an emollient. The skin of young children and infants has the hazard of nappy or diaper rash arising out of close confining clothes and the uncontrolled urination and defaecation performed by the child at this age.

The area in which the excretions are contained by the close fitting nappy provide warm and nutritive environment for proliferation of bacteria that leads to irritation causing discomfort and secondary ulceration. Further the child is susceptible to medical conditions such as eczema etc. requiring medication, It is pertinent to note that nappy rash is unknown in country where diapers are not used and children are left loosely covered with clothes unlike western countries where the children are wrapped in tightly fitting garments”.

It is therefore not surprising that Baby Oil containing entirely Light Liquid Paraffin based cosmetics oils have become popular because of the inherent property of Light Liquid Paraffin as an emollient and as moisturizer. It is also used in light application after bath to combat dryness of the skin.

(ii) The use of the Baby Oil as Massage Oil in India, we would also like to refer our traditions of massaging babies with vegetable oils. It is an Indian tradition to massage babies with vegetable oil most notably Til Oil. The child is exposed to the morning Sun to get the benefit of Vitamin D. The baby is thereafter given a quick bath. For dry skin and rashes Castor Oil is used as an emollient. The benefits of massaging vegetable oil containing Ayurvedic ingredient are contained in the various Ayurveda Texts.

(iii) We refer to the paper titled “effect of massage and use of oil on growth blood flow and sleep pattern in infants by professors from the College of Medical Sciences and G.T.B. Hospital Delhi. and published in the Indian Journal of Medical Research 112, Dec. 2000. PP 212,217. To quote from the study “ Vegetable Oils appear comparatively better in terms of growth and blood flow. Sesame Oil is better choice for massage as it significantly improved growth as well as blood flow as compared to the Mineral Oil (Johnson Baby Oil) which showed reduced blood flow. The available literature shows that, vegetable oils are well absorbed from the skin while there is negligible absorption of the mineral oil. Further mineral oils may clog the pores the skin.

(iv) Reference papers filed by M/s. Johnson and Johnson do not compare the benefits obtained by massage of Mineral Oils vis-à-vis Vegetable Oils on children in India.

(v) Available literature also show that Sesame Oil is rich in vitamins, carbohydrates, proteins. Its benefits as antioxidants, immunomodulation, on cardiovascular system and gastrointestinal system are also well documented. Treatment of infants with sesame oil are shown to produce remarkable improvement in skin pathology and unlike paraffin oil with no side effect or know adverse reaction.

(vi) Thirty-nine complaints were filed with the company between January 2004 to February,2005 for skin reactions in respect of Johnson Baby Oil. This is a significant number for M/s. Johnson and Johnson to have initiated a safety study on account of massaging of baby oil. FDA Maharashtra believe that consumers purchase Johnson Baby Oil as Massage Oil and further FDA Maharashtra believe that for every complaint received there are a large number of complaints that go unreported due to lack of awareness and generally the indifferent attitude of manufacturers to redress such complaints satisfactorily. BIS specification number IS 4011:1997 at 4.5 talks about carrying restricted consumer test which M/s. Johnson and Johnson could have carried out on Indian Babies.

(vii) In the Popular book on Baby Care written by Dr. R.K. Anand clearly recommends the use of vegetable oil for massaging and specifically discourage the use of mineral oil on the tender skin of babies for such use.

(viii) The Dean K.E.M. Hospital, Mumbai has recommended the following in respect of Johnson Baby Oil that,

- (a) Full ingredients /contents of the Baby Oil must be displayed on the oil.
- (b) The product should carry safety warnings as regarding effects on skin, conditions where it should be avoided and instructions in case of reactions.
- (c) If there is any change in safety status in other parts of the world it should also be reflected in the label of the products sold in India.
- (d) Massage of the baby with mineral oil has some beneficial effects. However in some cases it irritates skin and allergy and rashes can occur. Suitable warning should be given in the label.

FDA Maharashtra therefore rejects M/s. Johnson and Johnson's claim in respect of Johnson Baby Oil being an ideal Massage Oil.

FDA Maharashtra do agree that Baby Oil is an emollient to be applied lightly as a moisturizer and for protection against nappy rashes etc. Any massaging with Mineral Oil must carry an appropriate safety warning.

(2) Johnson's Baby Cream

FDA Maharashtra have no objections to the claims made in respect of Johnson's Baby Cream for protecting the skin dryness.

3) Johnson's Baby Lotion claims as.

- 1) With special skin oils that nourish moisturise and leave skin soft and younger looking because
- 2) Soft skin keeps your age a secret.

Johnson's Baby Products are basically targeted towards Baby Care while the claims relate to adults, therefore FDA Maharashtra finds no justification for Johnson to make these claims.

4) Johnson's Baby Milk Lotion claims as.

Helps nourish skin leaving it baby soft, smooth and fair.
FDA Maharashtra do not accept this claim. This claim is totally misplaced because baby's skin is already soft, smooth and babies don't require cosmetics products for regular use to change the colour of skin.

5) Johnson's Baby Hair Oil claims as.

A light non-greasy hair oil enriched with pro-vitamin B5 that penetrates deep into baby's scalp – Nourishes roots of the hair and keeps baby hair healthy.

The company has not submitted data to substantiate their claim of benefit to babies on account of use of Mineral Oil that forms 99.789% of the total composition of the product. Further by no stretch of imagination can a claim be made that 100% mineral oil will keep baby's hair healthy unless substantiated. The statement that D-panthenyl Triacetate at 0.11% in the composition of hair oil does job of nourishing the routes of hair and keep hair healthy is also not justifiable.

6) No more tears Johnson's Baby Shampoo claims as.

- 1) No more tears formula is as gentle to eyes as pure water. Gently cleanses your hair and scalp without stinging your baby's eyes. Added conditioner nourishes and softens baby's fine hair enhancing hair manageability and extra shine. Shampooing with JOHNSON'S BABY SHAMPOO (with conditioner) leaves your babies hair soft and healthy. Gentle enough for daily use.

This is an adult product. The claims are substantiated by data obtained from clinical trial conducted on adult citizens in USA. FDA Maharashtra therefore says that this product is a misnomer to be a "Baby Product".

7) Johnson's Baby Milk Soap claims as.

Johnson's Baby milk soap contains natural milk extract known for its nourishing properties to help make baby's skin naturally smooth and soft.

FDA Maharashtra say that at 0.1% of the total composition of the soap product the benefit accruing to the babies on account of use of the milk protein is not substantiated by Johnson and Johnson.

8) Johnson's Baby Moisturizing Soap and Johnson's Baby Moisturizing Soap Blossoms claims as.

- 1) Johnson's baby moisturizing soap enriched with goodness of coconut oil helps moisturise your baby's skin while cleansing it ever so gently.

- 2) The label is also exhibits the picture of broken Coconuts indicating the presence of coconut oil as ingredient in the product.

Since Coconut Oil is not present as ingredient no claims can be made by M/s. Johnson and Johnson as to the goodness of the Coconut oil being available in the soap.

In respect of Johnson's Baby Oil and Johnson's Bay Hair Oil M/s. Johnson and Johnson has not even mentioned the presence of Mineral Oil in the product on its label even though 99.785 % of the composition of the product is Light Liquid Paraffin Oil and all the properties of the products are derived from L.L.P. In respect of other products full list of ingredients have not been given and the key ingredient are mentioned on the lable by M/s. Johnson and Johnson and chosen subjectively.

Cosmetics Products labeled as Baby Products are extremely expensive as compared to the traditional products. Aggressive promotion using medical fraternity and heavy advertisements in the print and electronic media have resulted in these products making deep inroads in to the psyche of the target group viz. the mothers and young parents. Most of these target group buy these products at fancy prices believing that these products have special attributes that add value growth, development and health of the babies.

FDA Maharashtra are not against Johnson and Johnson Ltd., or any other company introducing new products in the country based on new ingredients. However the target consumer's right to information to make informed buying of such products should not be short – circuited. This is particularly true for baby products because the babies for whom these products are intended for use do not have a say in decision making. It is young parents and expectant mothers who make the informed choice whether to go for a traditional products or chemical based products introduced from the west. **For making the informed choice the rights of these persons to full information about all the ingredients present in the product including their percentage should be honored. They are also entitled to full information on adverse reactions and claims validated by the regulatory authorities. This is already being done by the Central Government in respect of Baby Food and therefore it will be appropriate for the Drug Controller of India to examine and issue guidelines under labeling rules directing all the manufacturer to declare complete composition of the Baby Products on the lines of Baby Food.**

As provincial regulator FDA Maharashtra are not empowered to give directions to enforce their observations in respect of all of the Baby Products. However in the larger Public Interest FDA Maharashtra issued the following directions to M/s. Johnson and Johnson Ltd. and to other Baby Product Cosmetics Manufacturers whom it had issued show cause notices for their Baby products.

- 1) Johnson and Johnson's Baby Products shall carry prominently safety warnings regarding the side effect that may be caused on account of use of these products due to the presence of chemicals like light Liquid Paraffin, Isopropyl Mysterate etc.
- 2) Johnson and Johnson shall not make any claim regarding any benefit arising on account of use of the Baby Products to babies except with the written approval of the Drugs Controller of India to avoid misbranding under Section 17C (c) of the Drugs and Cosmetics Act.

- 3) FDA Maharashtra further direct that Johnson and Johnson shall have time up to 01/08/05 to bring necessary approval from the Drugs Controller of India regarding the approval of the claims. In case Johnson and Johnson fails to secure the necessary approval form the Drug Controller of India for the “Baby Products” as above in respect of the claims then the Joint Commissioner (Head Quarter) and Drug Controller, Maharashtra shall take further necessary steps to issue directions to the company under the Drugs and Cosmetics Acts 1940 and Rules, not to manufacture for sale in the State of Maharashtra any cosmetics product titled as “Baby Cosmetics Product”
- 4) The above stipulations will not be applicable in case the manufacturer choosing to drop the ward ‘Baby” from the title of the product and positions the products as regular cosmetics.
- 5) Similar orders shall be applicable to all the manufacturers of Baby Cosmetics Products to whom FDA, Maharashtra had issued Show Cause Notice.

A copy of the order issued to M/.s. Johnson and Johnson Ltd., is also submitted to the Drugs Controller India, New Dehli for taking necessary legal and administrative action so that uniform action and policy will be made applicable to all Baby Products Cosmetics and their manufacturers through out India.

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