Drug Maker Created Needless Product Confusion With Name, Packaging Of Maalox Total Relief And Maalox Liquid Products, South Carolina Attorney Says

Bert Louthian, a lawyer with the Louthian Law Firm in Columbia, S.C., says the drug maker should have recognized the potential hazards caused by a new product’s name and packaging.

Columbia, South Carolina (PRWEB) March 3, 2010 -- A new product called Maalox Total Relief, which contains an active ingredient that can exacerbate medical problems in certain people, has caused serious harm to users who mistook it for the well-known brand’s antacids, and the FDA has ordered the company to change the product’s name and packaging.

Burt Louthian, a personal injury attorney with the Louthian Law Firm, P.A in Columbia, SC, says the company that makes Maalox, Novartis Consumer Health Inc., should never have created this confusion and its hazards.

“Product naming and packaging is basic marketing, and is a part of business that Maalox’s makers certainly invest a large amount of money in,” Louthian said. “But the fact is that Maalox put a product on the shelf that looked very much like its other well-known products but which was very different -- and potentially harmful to some consumers.”

Maalox Total Relief is used to treat diarrhea, upset stomach associated with nausea, heartburn, and gas caused by overeating. It contains the active ingredient bismuth subsalicylate, which is chemically related to aspirin and may cause similar adverse effects, such as bleeding, according to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration’s February 17 statement ("FDA Drug Safety Communication: Product Confusion with Maalox Total Relief and Maalox Liquid Products).

Maalox’s antacids -- including Maalox Advanced Regular Strength and Maalox Advanced Maximum Strength -- do not contain bismuth subsalicylate.

Bismuth subsalicylate should not be ingested by people with a history of gastrointestinal ulcers or bleeding disorders, or by children and teenagers who are recovering from a viral infection, the FDA says. People taking oral anti-diabetic medications, blood thinning medications such as Coumadin (warfarin) or Plavix (clopidogrel), and non-steroidal anti-inflammatory drugs (NSAIDS) like ibuprofen and naproxen can also have adverse reactions to bismuth subsalicylate.

“Maalox Total Relief and the traditional Maalox products are … liquid medications available without a prescription (OTC), but are NOT interchangeable,” the FDA statement says. “These products are intended to treat different medical conditions.”

The FDA says the makers of Maalox have agreed to change the name of Maalox Total Relief to one that does not include “Maalox” and to redesign the package to help distinguish the active ingredients and uses of this product from the traditional Maalox antacids. The company will also inform healthcare professionals about the different products sold under the Maalox brand, and will monitor and report adverse events associated with the use of Maalox brand products.

The company expects to begin selling the renamed product in September 2010.
“These are appropriate steps,” Louthian said. “But they’re little comfort to those who have been harmed already.”

The Louthian Law Firm is investigating cases of injuries caused by Maalox Total Relief and assisting those who have been harmed. If you or a loved one believes you have been harmed by your use of a Maalox product, contact the Louthian Law Firm today through the firm’s Web site or by telephone at 1-866-410-5656.

About The Louthian Law Firm

The Louthian Law Firm, P.A., of Columbia, South Carolina, has been obtaining fair compensation for personal injury victims since 1959. The firm was founded by Herbert Louthian, who has nearly 50 years of trial experience and is licensed to practice in all courts in South Carolina. The Louthian Law Firm focuses on personal injury cases involving medical malpractice; prescription drug injuries; car, truck and motorcycle accidents; and other serious and catastrophic injuries throughout South Carolina.

For a free, confidential case evaluation, contact the firm by phone at 866-410-5656 or visit the firm's Web site at http://www.louthianlaw.com/.

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Contact Information
Bert Louthian
Louthian Law Firm
http://www.louthianlaw.com/index.asp
1-866-410-5656

Mike Dayton
Consultwebs.com, Inc.
http://www.consultwebs.com/
919.880.1748

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