

## Whereborne?

**By Reg P. Wydeven  
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With small children, Disney movies are a fixture in our household. One of my favorites is 'Dumbo,' the tale of the elephant who uses his gigantic ears to fly. Dumbo learns to fly only after he is given a "magical" feather. As it turns out, the feather wasn't magical and Dumbo could fly all by himself all along.

What's the harm in claiming something is magical when it's really not? Well, the makers of Airborne found out to the tune of \$23.3 million. That's the amount the company agreed to pay as a settlement for a class-action lawsuit for false advertising, however, it did not admit to any wrongdoing or illegal conduct.

Airborne products were created by Victoria Knight McDowell, a former second-grade teacher who invented the formula as a result of constantly being exposed to germ-infested students. Airborne basically consists of vitamins A, C, and E and magnesium, zinc, selenium, herbs, and other ingredients. It's called Airborne because it combats airborne viruses and germs.

The company claimed its products, which include Airborne Effervescent Health Formula, Airborne On-the-Go, Airborne Power Pixies, Airborne Nighttime, Airborne Jr., Airborne Gummi, and Airborne Seasonal (formerly sold as Airborne Seasonal Relief), effectively prevented and treated colds. Airborne now claims their formulas are immune boosters.

In early 2006, a consumer, who objected that the formula did not work as advertised, filed the lawsuit in California. The suit came on the heels of a nationally televised report that questioned the validity of a clinical trial touted by Airborne as a study that offered proof that its products work.

The Center for Science in the Public Interest, a nonprofit consumer watchdog group, evaluated Airborne as part of an investigation on cold remedies and "found little or no evidence that the product works." According to the CSPI, Airborne is also being investigated by 24 state attorneys general and the Federal Trade Commission.

Consumers who bought Airborne products in the U.S. from May 1, 2001, to Nov. 29, 2007, are eligible for a refund. Call 888-952-9080 or visit [airbornehealthsettlement.com](http://airbornehealthsettlement.com) for details.

Dumbo is also purportedly considering a lawsuit.