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6
7 **UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT**
NORTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

8 Krystal Lopez, individually and on behalf of
9 all others similarly situated,

10 *Plaintiff,*

11 vs.

12 Zarbee's, Inc.,

13 *Defendant.*
14
15
16

Case No. 3:22-cv-04465-CRB

**FIRST AMENDED CLASS ACTION
COMPLAINT**

DEMAND FOR JURY TRIAL

Table of Contents

1

2 I. Introduction..... 1

3 II. Parties..... 2

4 III. Jurisdiction, venue, and divisional assignment..... 2

5 IV. Facts..... 2

6 A. It is important to consumers that over-the-counter melatonin is accurately
dosed and labelled..... 2

7 B. The FDA does not allow melatonin to be unreasonably overdosed..... 5

8 C. Scientific research reveals serious problems with the accuracy of melatonin
dosing and labelling in Canada. Scientists warn that the same is likely true of
9 some U.S. brands. 6

10 D. Zarbee’s markets melatonin for children and sells melatonin supplements to
millions of U.S. consumers..... 7

11 E. Scientific testing reveals that, unlike other manufacturers, Zarbee’s Melatonin
has an unreasonable excess of melatonin..... 9

12 F. Zarbee’s labelling is false and misleading to reasonable consumers..... 11

13 G. Zarbee’s overcharges millions of consumers..... 12

14 H. Ms. Lopez was misled and harmed by Zarbee’s misleading labelling. 13

15 I. Plaintiff has no adequate remedy at law. 14

16 V. Class action allegations..... 15

17 VI. Claims..... 17

18 Count 1: Violations of State Consumer Protection Acts..... 17

19 Count 2: Violation of California Unfair Competition Law (UCL)..... 18

20 Count 3: Violation of California’s False Advertising Law (FAL)..... 19

21 Count 4: Violation of the California Consumers Legal Remedies Act (CLRA)..... 20

22 Count 5: Breach of Express Warranty 21

23 Count 6: Unjust Enrichment/Quasi-Contract..... 22

24 VII. Jury Demand..... 22

25 VIII. Prayer for Relief..... 22

26

27

28

I. Introduction.

1. Melatonin is a neurohormone that regulates the brain’s sleep cycle. Millions of consumers take over-the-counter melatonin supplements to help them sleep. Because melatonin alters brain chemistry, it is important that these supplements are accurately dosed and labelled.

2. A few years ago, scientists tested Canadian melatonin supplements and found that, for a number of brands, the true amount of melatonin varied wildly from the label. Scientists, the National Institutes of Health, and consumer advocates have warned that the same is true in the U.S.

3. Zarbee’s is a major U.S. brand of melatonin supplements, sold nationwide at retailers like Walmart, Kroger, and Target. Many Zarbee’s melatonin products are specifically marketed for young children. Each bottle claims to have a specific dose of melatonin per serving. For example:



4. Like millions of other consumers, Ms. Lopez bought Zarbee’s melatonin for her children and trusted the accuracy of Zarbee’s dosing and labelling. To determine how much melatonin is really in Zarbee’s, a university mass-spectrometry laboratory tested multiple bottles, including her bottle. The results were alarming. The true amount of melatonin in her bottle was 216% of the claimed amount. The tested bottles had far more melatonin than the amount on the label (and far more melatonin than the “reasonable excess” permitted by the FDA).

5. Zarbee’s systematically misrepresents how much melatonin is in the supplements it sells. Consumers are being misled and overcharged, and children are being put at risk.

1 **II. Parties.**

2 6. Plaintiff Krystal Lopez is domiciled in Salinas, California. She purchased a bottle of
3 Zarbee's Children's Sleep Melatonin in California.

4 7. The proposed class includes citizens of every state.

5 8. Defendant Zarbee's Inc. is a Delaware corporation with its principal place of business
6 at 11650 State St. #101, Draper, Utah 84020.

7 **III. Jurisdiction, venue, and divisional assignment.**

8 9. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction under 28 U.S.C. § 1332(d)(2). The amount
9 in controversy exceeds \$5,000,000, exclusive of interest and costs, and the matter is a class action in
10 which one or more members of the proposed class are citizens of a state different from Defendant.

11 10. The Court has personal jurisdiction over Defendant because Defendant sold Zarbee's
12 melatonin products to consumers in California, including to Plaintiff.

13 11. Venue is proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(1) and 28 U.S.C. § 1391(d) because
14 Defendant would be subject to personal jurisdiction in this District if this District were a separate
15 state, given that Defendant sold Zarbee's melatonin products to consumers in this District,
16 including Plaintiff. Venue is also proper under 28 U.S.C. § 1391(b)(2) because a substantial part
17 of Defendant's conduct giving rise to the claims occurred in this District, including Defendant's
18 sale to Plaintiff.

19 12. Divisional Assignment. This action arose in Monterey County (San Jose Division).
20 Ms. Lopez purchased Zarbee's melatonin while living in Salinas (in Monterey County). Thus, a
21 substantial part of the events giving rise to the claim occurred in Monterey County.

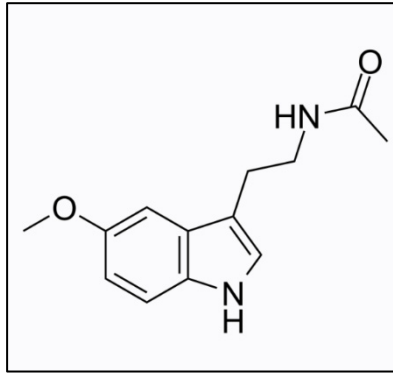
22 **IV. Facts.**

23 **A. It is important to consumers that over-the-counter melatonin is accurately dosed**
24 **and labelled.**

25 13. Melatonin (N-acetyl-5-methoxytryptamine) is a neurohormone produced by the pineal
26 gland in the brain. It regulates the brain's circadian rhythm and sleep cycle.

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The chemical structure of melatonin

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8 14. Millions of U.S. consumers take melatonin supplements to treat sleep problems,
9 anxiety, and other issues. Melatonin is one of the most popular over-the-counter supplements in the
10 U.S., and its use has “significantly increased” in the last 20 years.¹ Its use to help children sleep is
11 becoming increasingly popular too, which concerns health experts.²

12 15. As scientists explained in the *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*, because melatonin is
13 “self-prescribed” (i.e., purchased directly by consumers who are not experts), it is particularly
14 “important that labels are informative and representative of the product,” i.e., that the “label claim
15 values for the active ingredient are accurate.”³

16 16. In particular, it is important to consumers that melatonin is not excessively dosed,
17 compared to what is represented on the label. The likelihood of side effects from melatonin increases
18 with the dosage. Side effects of melatonin include headaches, dizziness, nausea, or excessive or
19 unwanted sleepiness.⁴ As the Texas Health hospital network explains, a “lower dose” will reduce
20 the risk of “side effects” and thus “using the lowest effective dose will give you the best outcomes
21 while keeping any undesirable side effects at bay.”⁵ And as another major manufacturer of melatonin
22

23 ¹ JAMA Research Letter, *Trends in Use of Melatonin Supplements Among US Adults, 1999-*
24 *2018*, 327(5) JAMA 483 (2022).

25 ² The New York Times, *Parents Are Relying on Melatonin to Help Their Kids Sleep. Should*
They?, <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/18/parenting/melatonin-sleep-kids.html>

26 ³ Erland, L. & Saxena, P., *Melatonin Natural Health Products and supplements: Presence of*
serotonin and significant variability of melatonin content, 13 *Journal of Clinical Sleep Medicine*
27 275–281 (2017).

28 ⁴ NIH National Library of Medicine Medline Plus, *Melatonin*,
<https://medlineplus.gov/druginfo/natural/940.html>

⁵ [https://www.texashealth.org/areyouawellbeing/Health-and-Well-Being/Is-It-Safe-to-Take-](https://www.texashealth.org/areyouawellbeing/Health-and-Well-Being/Is-It-Safe-to-Take-Melatonin-Every-Night)
Melatonin Every Night

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