CELLULAR HEALTH

"Peptide Therapy" on Wellness Clinic Menus: What the Word Covers, Approved vs Compounded vs Unapproved, and Questions a Coach Can Help Clients Ask

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Short answer: "Peptide therapy" is a marketing phrase, not a medical category. It can describe an FDA-approved prescription medicine, a compounded product made by a pharmacy, or a product that is not approved for human use at all. These are very different things. Coaches do not recommend, source or dose any of them. They can help clients understand the categories and bring good questions to a licensed clinician.

This page is education only. It is not medical advice and does not promote any peptide product or clinic.

What a peptide is

A peptide is a short chain of amino acids. Many natural hormones are peptides, and so are several approved medicines, including insulin and the GLP-1 medicines semaglutide and tirzepatide. Being a peptide says nothing about whether a product is safe or works. That depends on the specific molecule, dose, quality and the evidence behind it.

Three categories clients mix up

1. FDA-approved medicines. These have been reviewed for safety and effectiveness for specific uses on their label. You can look up approval status on [Drugs@FDA](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/daf/) and read the label on [DailyMed](https://dailymed.nlm.nih.gov/dailymed/). Approval for one use does not mean approval for every use a clinic advertises. **2. Compounded products.** Compounding pharmacies make preparations for individual patients under specific legal conditions. FDA explains that compounded drugs are not FDA-approved, which means the agency does not verify their safety, effectiveness or quality before they are sold ([FDA compounding Q&A](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/human-drug-compounding/compounding-and-fda-questions-and-answers)). FDA has also listed certain bulk drug substances, including several peptides promoted online, as raising significant safety concerns for compounding ([FDA bulk substances page](https://www.fda.gov/drugs/human-drug-compounding/certain-bulk-drug-substances-use-compounding-may-present-s **3. Unapproved or "research use only" products.** Vials sold online as "for research", "not for human consumption" or "for lab use" are not medicines for people. Quality, contents and sterility are unknown. A coach should never help a client buy, store, mix or inject these.

Why menus blur the lines

Wellness clinic menus often list peptides next to sauna sessions and supplements, which makes them feel like lifestyle extras. They are not. Anything injected is a medical intervention that needs a licensed prescriber, a proper assessment and follow-up. Common claims include faster recovery, better sleep, fat loss, skin effects and "anti-ageing". Ask what human evidence supports each specific claim, not peptides in general. Animal and cell

studies are an early step, not proof in people.

How to read a single menu line

Take one line at a time. Write down the product name, the claim made for it, and the price. Then look the name up on [Drugs@FDA](https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/daf/). If it is not there, it is not an approved medicine. If it is there, check whether the advertised use matches the label. If the clinic says it is compounded, ask which pharmacy makes it. This takes ten minutes and turns a confusing menu into a short list of questions for a doctor. A coach can sit with the client while they do it, without giving a medical opinion on any line.

Fraud signals to watch for

FDA's [health fraud page](https://www.fda.gov/consumers/health-fraud-scams) describes common warning signs. In peptide marketing they often look like this: - "Cures" or "reverses" a disease or ageing. - One product treating many unrelated problems. - "Doctor-formulated" or "pharmaceutical grade" with no named prescriber or pharmacy. - Before-and-after photos and testimonials instead of trial data. - Pressure to buy packages up front. - No prescription, no medical history and no follow-up.

Questions a client can ask a clinic

1. Is this specific product FDA-approved, compounded or neither? 2. Who prescribes it, and what is their licence? 3. Which pharmacy makes it, and is it state-licensed? 4. What human studies support it for my goal? 5. What are the known risks and side effects, and who do I call if I feel unwell? 6. How will it interact with my other medicines and conditions? A coach can help a client write these questions down. The coach does not judge the answers medically. The client takes them to their own doctor or pharmacist.

Scripts that keep you in scope

- *"Can you recommend a good peptide for recovery?"* "I don't recommend or source peptides. I can help with sleep, training load and food, and you can ask your doctor about medicines." - *"My clinic says it's totally safe."* "Ask them which studies show that for your goal and whether the product is approved. Your own doctor can help you weigh it." - *"Can you show me how to inject it?"* "No. Injection technique and any medicine use belong with your prescriber or pharmacist."

If a client is already using a product

Stay calm and non-judgemental. Encourage them to tell their own doctor and pharmacist exactly what they are using, including the label and where it came from. If they report symptoms such as swelling or redness at an injection site, fever, chest pain, breathing problems or feeling very unwell, they should seek medical care promptly. Record that you referred, and do not adjust your coaching to "work around" the product.

Where the coach adds value

The habits that most reliably help recovery, body composition and energy are not on a peptide menu: consistent sleep, enough protein, progressive strength training, daily walking and less alcohol. A coach who helps a client do those things well, and who can explain calmly why a product claim needs evidence, is doing exactly the right job.

Write it into your scope

Add a line to your intake form: "I do not recommend, source, sell, store, prepare or administer medicines, peptides or supplements. I refer medicine questions to your clinician." Use [NBHWC scope of

practice](https://nbhwc.org/scope-of-practice/) language.

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Safety note

If you have a medical condition, are pregnant, or take prescription medicines, check with your own doctor first.

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