

World Health Organization (WHO)
**International Code of
Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes**

taking the next step on the
baby-friendly journey

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- WHO is the directing and coordinating authority for health within the United Nations system. It is responsible for providing leadership on global health matters, shaping the health research agenda, setting norms and standards, articulating evidence-based policy options, providing technical support to countries and monitoring and assessing health trends.

WHO Code history

- 1974 World Health Assembly “noted the general decline of breast-feeding in many parts of the world”
- 1978 & 1979 WHO and UNICEF worked with member states to draft an international code
- 1981 WHO recommended a resolution endorsing the International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes

WHO Code history

- May 1981 - World Health Assembly adopted the Code
- Unanimous except for 3 abstaining, and 1 against . . .
- U.S. declared it “antagonistic to free trade and contrary to this country's antitrust laws and free-speech rights”
- Finally . . . 1994 U.S. endorsed the Code

what is the WHO Code?

- “basic minimum requirement to protect healthy practices in respect of infant and young child feeding”
--International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)
- “**recommendation** rather than as a **regulation**”

WHO Code intent

Article 1. Aim of the Code

The aim of this Code is to contribute to the provision of safe and adequate nutrition for infants, by the protection and promotion of breast-feeding, and by ensuring the proper use of breast-milk substitutes, when these are necessary, on the basis of adequate information and through appropriate marketing and distribution.

- Speaks *for* breastfeeding
- Protects babies, parents, and health care workers
- Code does not make formula unavailable

Who Code

Aimed at the **marketing** of

. . . anything that replaces, in part or in whole, breastmilk as a food for babies, and
. . . bottles and teats

WHO Code provides guidance in 3 main areas:

1. Protect & promote breastfeeding and define breastmilk substitutes
2. Marketing to public
 - advertising & information
 - samples & supplies
3. Marketing to healthcare facilities & workers

Code provisions

Breastmilk is “unequaled” — all else is a substitute

- Recognizes exclusive breastfeeding for first 6 months as the way babies are to be fed
- Anything that replaces human milk is seen as a substitute whether a food or beverage
 - **Infant formula**
 - **Other milk products**
 - **Cereals**
 - **Pureed baby foods**
 - **Juices and baby teas**
 - **Follow-on milks**
 - **Bottled water**

Code provisions

Advertising and information

No advertising to the public

No contact between formula reps & moms

Educational products include

benefits and risks

Product label guidelines

Code provisions

Samples & supplies

No free samples to pregnant women, mothers, or families

No free or low-cost human milk substitutes

- Hospitals
- Maternity centers
- Other parts of healthcare system

Code provisions

Marketing to health care facilities & health care workers

No displays, posters, promotional materials

No gifts or samples

Any information distributed to healthcare workers must be “factual and scientific”

Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all healthcare staff.
2. Train all healthcare staff in skills necessary to implement this policy.
3. Inform all pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding.
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within a half hour of birth.

Ten Steps, cont'd

5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and how to maintain lactation even if they should be separated from their infants.
6. Give newborn infants no food or drink other than breastmilk unless medically indicated.
7. Practice rooming in—allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day.
8. Encourage breastfeeding in response to feeding cues.
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers to breastfeeding infants.
10. Foster the establishment of breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge.

Foundation is laid. Next steps?

- National WIC Association, *NWA Statement on the WHO International Code of Marketing Breast-Milk Substitutes*, July 2011. http://www.nwica.org/sites/default/files/Statement%20on%20WHO%20International%20Code%20of%20Marketing%20of%20Breast-Milk%20Substitutes_0.pdf
- American Public Health Association (APHA), *A Call to Action on Breastfeeding: A Fundamental Public Health Issue*. Policy Date: 11/6/2007; Policy Number 200714. Accessed 10/21/2012: <http://www.apha.org/advocacy/policy/policysearch/default.htm?id=1360>

“6. Denounce aggressive marketing of human milk substitutes, particularly marketing in health care settings, and insist on compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.”

Beyond the code

- 1990 *Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, promotion and Support of Breastfeeding*
- 1991 Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative—
launched by WHO & UNICEF
- 1995 United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- 2003 *Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding*

Resources

World Health Organization, International Code of Marketing Breast-Milk Substitutes, 1981,

http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/code_english.pdf

WHO: Choosing Good Nutrition – e-LENA

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3jBsLsJvu80&feature=youtu.be>

WHO/UNICEF, Innocenti Declaration on the Protection, Promotion and Support of Breastfeeding. 1990

http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/index_24807.html

Resources, cont'd

WHO/UNICEF, 2005, Innocenti Declaration 2005 on Infant and Young Child Feeding.

http://www.unicef.org/nutrition/files/innocenti2005m_FINAL_ARTWORK_3_MAR.pdf

(Signed by: American Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine, International Lactation Consultants Association, Wellstart International, Regione Toscana, WABA, IBFAN, La Leche League International, UNICEF, WHO)

“We who are assembled . . . declare that these actions are urgent and necessary to ensure the best start in life for our children, for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, and for the realisation of the human rights of present and future generations.”

Lauwers, Judith and Anna Swisher, *Counseling the Nursing Mother*, Jones & Bartlett Learning, LLC, 2011, Sudbury MA

Resources, cont'd

- *Selling Out Mothers and Babies: Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes in the USA* by Marsha Walker, RN, IBCLC (106 pp). Published 2001 by the National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy (NABA). Available from NABA, Educational Services, 254 Conant Road, Weston, MA 02493-1756 (<http://www.naba-breastfeeding.org>)
- Branching Out: New Dimensions in Infant Formula and Baby Bottle Marketing, by Marcia Walker, (13-page brochure) National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy, 2011. <http://www.naba-breastfeeding.org/images/BranchingOut2011.pdf>
- National WIC Association, NWA Statement on the WHO International Code of Marketing Breast-Milk Substitutes, July 2011. Accessed 10/21/2012:
http://www.nwica.org/sites/default/files/Statement%20on%20WHO%20International%20Code%20of%20Marketing%20of%20Breast-Milk%20Substitutes_0.pdf

Resources, cont'd

American Public Health Association (APHA), A Call to Action on Breastfeeding: A Fundamental Public Health Issue. Policy Date: 11/6/2007; Policy Number 200714. Accessed 10/21/2012:

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- “6. Denounce aggressive marketing of human milk substitutes, particularly marketing in health care settings, and insist on compliance with the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes.”

International Baby Food Action Network, www.ibfan.org

- IBFAN aims to improve the health and well-being of babies and young children, their mothers and their families through the protection, promotion and support of breastfeeding and optimal infant feeding practices.

Resources, cont'd

National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy, <http://www.naba-breastfeeding.org>

- The National Alliance for Breastfeeding Advocacy (NABA) was formed to fill the existing gaps in breastfeeding protection, promotion, and support. NABA advocates for breastfeeding at the state and federal levels, to move breastfeeding into the public health arena, and restore breastfeeding as the cultural norm. NABA is the organization representing IBFAN (International Baby Food Action Network) in the United States and as such monitors the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes in the US. NABA is a member of the US Breastfeeding Committee and is represented on USDA's Breastfeeding Promotion Consortium.

Federal Trade Commission <http://www.ftc.gov/index.shtml>

- To prevent business practices that are anticompetitive or deceptive or unfair to consumers; to enhance informed consumer choice and public understanding of the competitive process; and to accomplish this without unduly burdening legitimate business activity.