

Campaign for ethical marketing



November 2003

According to UNICEF: *“Improved breastfeeding practices and reduction of artificial feeding could save an estimated 1.5 million children a year.”* Yet baby food companies continue to market artificial foods in ways that undermine breastfeeding. The people responsible have names and addresses. You can help to stop them.

The *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* was adopted as a ‘minimum requirement’ for all countries by the World Health Assembly (which sets the policy of the World Health Organisation) in 1981. The *International Code* aims to protect breastfeeding by restricting company marketing practices and to ensure breastmilk substitutes are used properly when these are necessary. A number of Resolutions address questions of interpretation and changes in marketing practices and scientific knowledge, and have equal weight to the *International Code*.

Nestlé’s idealising leaflets in Egypt and Vietnam

Background: The leaflets shown on this page were found in Egypt and Vietnam recently. They demonstrate how Nestlé idealises artificial infant feeding and undermines breastfeeding.

The *International Code* limits companies to providing scientific and factual information to health workers. Nestlé’s leaflets idealise its infant formulas by, for example, suggesting they are *‘The perfect Start...’*

Idealising leaflets with similar messages to these are sometimes found being given to mothers in health facilities. Nestlé claims they are intended for health workers only, but appears to produce and distribute them in bulk so they are passed on to mothers.

A suggested letter about these violations and the promotions to mothers in South Africa shown overleaf is given here to help you call on the man responsible for the malpractice to end it. Write to: Peter Brabeck-Letmathé CEO, Nestlé S.A., Av. Nestlé 55, CH-1800 Vevey, Switzerland. Fax: 41 21 924 2813.

Age of infant	Quantity per feed		No. of feeds per day		
	Amount (ml)	% of maximum	Formula	Others	
1st and 2nd weeks	90	3	6		
3rd and 4th weeks	120	4	5		
2nd month	150	5	5		
3rd and 4th months	180	6	5		
5th and 6th months	210	7	4	1	
From the 7th month onwards	240	7	3	1-2**	

This leaflet found in Egypt, idealises Nan 1 infant formula by claiming: *“The perfect START with guaranteed protein, fat, carbohydrates and beyond...”*

This leaflet promotes Lactogen 1 infant formula for brain, body and bone development. It was found in a clinic in Vietnam, but not all the text has been translated.

You claim that Nestlé abides by the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and that you personally investigate any hint of a violation.

Perhaps you can explain why Nestlé is producing leaflets which idealise infant formula, such as its *Lactogen 1* leaflet in Vietnam promoting the product for brain body and bone development and its *Nan 1* leaflet in Egypt which claims the formula is *‘The perfect START’*. As you know the Code limits companies to providing scientific and factual information to health workers, but these leaflets idealise artificial feeding and so undermine breastfeeding.

Article 5.5 of the Code states: *‘Marketing personnel, in their business capacity, should not seek direct or indirect contact of any kind with pregnant women or with mothers of infants and young children.’* In October 2003 Nestlé was advertising in the media in South Africa: *“Hey mums, Nestlé Blue Bear and the Baby-Care Friends are in town’* and inviting mothers to *‘an absorbing 15-minute talk on baby feeding.’* Such practices demonstrate Nestlé’s disregard for the World Health Assembly marketing requirements.

I request you take action to stop this and other malpractice reported to you immediately.

Please help health campaigners in Pakistan

Background: Despite opposition from the baby food industry, principally Nestlé, the Government of Pakistan has introduced legislation implementing the *International Code* and Resolutions. This was prompted in large part by the courageous stand taken by former Nestlé-employee and whistle-blower Syed Aamar Raza (who has not seen his wife and two young children since September 1999, as he fears returning to Pakistan).

The law does not implement all the provisions of the Code and Resolutions, but it is a useful starting point for health campaigners in Pakistan. They are asking for help in calling on the Government authorities to produce the rules and regulations that go with the law as soon as possible and to ensure that the rules and regulations do not introduce further weaknesses.

Suggested letter to send to: Mr. Nasser Khan, The Federal Minister of Health, Pak, Secretariat, Block "C", Islamabad, Pakistan. Fax: #92 920290. Please send a copy to Baby Milk Action:



Baby Milk Action coordinates the 20-country international Nestlé boycott which has prompted some improvements to

marketing practices. The boycott focuses on Nestlé because it controls about 40% of the world market in baby milks and uses its influence to undermine controls on marketing activities. Monitoring shows Nestlé to be the largest single source of violations worldwide. ⇒ If you are boycotting Nestlé products, such as Nescafé coffee, write and tell Nestlé.

Many thanks to everyone who wrote to Nestlé about its broken promise over labelling of complementary foods. Nestlé's Senior Policy Advisor responded to a campaigner: *'From the end of June 2003 NO infant cereals in Bulgaria are recommended from four months. "From six months" stickers have been put on all products previously recommended from four months. It is confirmed that the SINLAC advertisement was discontinued at the end of June.'* Nestlé still has a way to go as products in the shops are not yet with the stickers and some products are being labelled for use from 5 months. We continue to monitor the situation. Nestlé is still refusing to make changes required by the Health Department in Hong Kong, saying 'consultations' are in process. In reality, the Department policy is already clearly defined as '6 months.'

I welcome the adoption of the Ordinance for the *Protection of Breastfeeding and Young Child Nutrition*. I look forward to the publication of the rules and regulations required to put the Ordinance into effect so that the aggressive baby food marketing practices we hear about in my country can be challenged.

The *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and the subsequent, relevant Resolutions of the World Health Assembly, from which your Ordinance draws inspiration, are important measures. They do not ban the marketing of breastmilk substitutes, but do prohibit all forms of advertising and promotion, limiting companies to providing scientific and factual information to health workers. In drawing up your rules we specifically urge you to ensure that baby food companies are not involved in the monitoring of the Ordinance. Many governments, anxious to build public confidence in mechanisms for ensuring food safety, have recognised the risks of such involvement and not included the industry. Article 11.3 of the Code requires companies to monitor their own activities independently of government measures. The provision of company produced 'educational' materials and sponsorship of health workers, is also a concern as this undermines the provision of objective information to parents.

Growth in the infant feeding market in Pakistan can only mean thousands more infants being deprived of their mother's milk and facing illness and even death, leaving Pakistani families and health services with the burden of picking up these costs. Best wishes for your endeavours to prevent this happening.

You can't trust Nestlé

Background: Why is Nestlé holding 'absorbing 15-minute talks on baby feeding' in South Africa (see advertisement below). UNICEF's Legal Officer, who advises governments on interpretation of the Code, has stated previously: *'Article 5.5 of the Code states quite clearly that the marketing personnel of companies manufacturing products within the scope of the Code, in their business capacity, "should not seek direct or indirect contact of any kind with pregnant women or with mothers of infants and young children."* (emphasis added). Hence, any form of contact with mothers of children under the age of three years is prohibited, irrespective of the motivation behind the contact.' Nestlé clearly understands this, as its Senior Policy Advisor has stated in public and on the record on several occasions: *"The only contact that I would say with the mother is through the label."* The advertisement below and the baby clubs Nestlé runs in many countries show Nestlé is not telling the truth. See the letter overleaf to complain to Nestlé's Chief Executive Officer.



Join Baby Milk Action to receive our **Update** newsletter. 23 St. Andrew's Street, Cambridge, CB2 3AX. £15 waged, £7 unwaged. Tel: (01223) 464420. Fax (01223) 464417. E-mail: info@babymilkaction.org Baby Milk Action's Web Site is at <http://www.babymilkaction.org/> and includes an on-line shop.