

## What is Baby Milk Action?

Baby Milk Action is a non-profit organisation which aims to save lives and to end the avoidable suffering caused by inappropriate infant feeding. Baby Milk Action works within a global network to strengthen independent, transparent and effective controls on the marketing of the baby feeding industry.

The global network is called the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), consisting of over 200 citizens groups in more than 100 countries. Baby Milk Action is funded by development organisations, charitable trusts and, principally, our members and supporters. We do not accept funds from companies.

### Protecting breastfeeding

There is no food more locally produced or sustainable than breastmilk. A breastfed child is less likely to suffer from gastroenteritis, respiratory and ear infections, diabetes, allergies and other illnesses. In areas with unsafe water a bottle-fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea.

Improved breastfeeding practices and reduction of artificial feeding could save 1.5 million children a year - more than would be saved by universal provision of safe water, sanitation and vaccination.

That is why the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* was introduced in 1981 to regulate the marketing of breastmilk substitutes. But companies continue to violate its provisions.

### Protecting babies fed on formula

Breastmilk substitutes are legitimate products for a child who is not breastfed and does not have access to expressed or donor breastmilk. The Code requires companies to comply with its provisions on composition, labelling and marketing independently of government action, so that the risks of artificial feeding are minimised. All parents and carers have a right to accurate, independent information.

Baby Milk Action is not anti-baby milk. Our work protects all mothers and infants from irresponsible marketing.

## Join Baby Milk Action

Become a member by joining online at:

[www.babymilkaction.org/shop](http://www.babymilkaction.org/shop)

Annual payment: £7 - unwaged, £18 - waged, £25 - family (there is also a pay monthly option). Alternatively, send a cheque to the address below with your name and contact details or telephone us with card details.

### Campaigning



Contact Mike Brady, Campaigns and Networking Coordinator, for information on campaigning to hold companies to account - including promoting the Nestlé boycott - and working for stronger action by governments and enforcement bodies.

### Policy



Contact Patti Rundall OBE, Policy Director, for information on policy, conflicts of interest, sponsorship in education, legislation and standards for the marketing and composition of baby milks at the World Health Assembly, Codex Alimentarius and the European Union.

### Information and support



Contact Sarah Hansen, Office Manager (right), or Lisa Woodburn, Post Room Manager, for information materials, to arrange a Baby Milk Action stall for your



event, to become a member or to make a donation to our work.

BABY MILK  
ACTION



**what we do  
how to help**

**Baby Milk Action - Tel: 01223 464420**  
34 Trumpington Street, Cambridge, CB2 1QY  
[www.babymilkaction.org](http://www.babymilkaction.org)  
[info@babymilkaction.org](mailto:info@babymilkaction.org)

**Protecting breastfeeding  
Protecting babies fed on formula**

# Protecting breastfeeding - Protecting babies fed on formula

## Holding companies to account

With our partners in the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), we have been monitoring baby food companies for over 30 years. We expose how companies mislead parents, encourage artificial feeding and put their profits before health.

## Working for honest labelling



With IBFAN, we have stopped many harmful company practices. Baby pictures have been removed from labels and messages are required warning that breastfeeding is better for babies. However, more recently companies have been adding logos and text claiming health benefits from formula feeding, such as

Nestlé's logos saying its baby milk 'protects' and builds immunity. We are working to stop these claims and to improve warnings and instructions. Powdered formula is not a sterile product and may contain harmful bacteria. Thanks to our work, companies now admit this on labels in the UK, but instructions need improving, and they are still refusing to add warnings elsewhere in the world.

## Helping the public to force changes



We target Nestlé with a boycott because of its leading role in driving down standards. Nestlé is now one of the four most boycotted companies on the planet. This has forced some important changes, but instead of doing all that is required, Nestlé invests in an anti-boycott team. We need you to tell others about the boycott and to support our letter-writing campaigns against Nestlé and all companies that break the rules.

## Changing health policies

Baby Milk Action helped to bring in the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes*, adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1981. This sets the rules for marketing baby milks and other breastmilk substitutes. We work with Health Ministries at the Assembly to bring in new Resolutions that keep pace with new marketing practices and scientific knowledge. We also play a lead role in IBFAN's defence of the Code and Resolutions elsewhere, such as at Codex Alimentarius, an international body that sets food composition and labelling rules, and at the European Union.

## Strengthening laws



We work with our international partners to bring the Code and Resolutions into legislation. There are now over 60 countries with strong laws in place. Some of these laws are so successful that industry analysts complain about increasing breastfeeding rates and the need to fight "a rearguard action against regulation on a country-by-country basis" (Ref. Euromonitor). Sometimes it is a victory just to stop laws being weakened - as happened when strengthened regulations in the Philippines were challenged by the industry in court.

## The Baby Feeding Law Group

We convened the Baby Feeding Law Group (BFLG) in 1997 to bring together UK health professional organisations and mother support groups to work to implement the Code and Resolutions in UK law. The BFLG speaks collectively to Government Ministers and enforcement authorities.

## Improving information for parents



We coordinate the BFLG monitoring project and produce monitoring reports for Trading Standards and the Advertising Standards Authority. This has led to many misleading claims being removed from labels in the UK. For example, flashes claiming a brand is 'closest to breastmilk' no longer appear. The ASA has upheld various complaints we have brought, such as when companies have claimed their formula builds the immune system. Following a presentation of our evidence, the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child stated that "aggressive promotion of breastmilk substitutes remains common" in the UK and called for the Government to bring the law into line with the Code and Resolutions.

## Training on the regulations

We provide training to our own supporters and other organisations on monitoring the Code and Resolutions and to policy makers on how to implement these in legislation. An online training course and other materials are being developed.

## Resources and membership



We stock a range of resources, available through our online Virtual Shop. Our breastfeeding calendar is particularly popular. People can also become members of Baby Milk Action and send donations - your support is vital for our work to continue. If you have not done so already, please do become a member.