



the nestlé boycott

UNICEF states that one and a half million babies die each year because they are not breastfed. Millions more contract diseases that could have been prevented with breastfeeding. The World Health Organization and UNICEF recognize that aggressive marketing of artificial infant feeding products undermines women's confidence in their ability to breastfeed. The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (outlined on a fact sheet in this kit) is a tool that government's can use to control this marketing. Individuals, however, can also have an impact.

Nestlé promotes artificial infant feeding around the world. The company controls about 40 percent of the worldwide market for baby food. It is the world's largest food manufacturer, and does business in more than 80 countries. The Nestlé boycott, active in 20 countries, is a tool individuals can use to send a message that its marketing is not acceptable.

The following provisions of the Code are regularly violated by Nestlé:

1. No advertising of infant feeding products to the public.
2. No free samples to mothers or health care workers.
3. No promotion of these products in health care facilities.

Although Canada has endorsed the International Code and all the subsequent Resolutions, Canada has not legislated the Code. Thus Nestlé may legally break the Code, but because of the health implications, it has a strong moral imperative to comply. Nestlé markets directly to Canadian women in several ways. The company sends information on artificial feeding and product samples directly to new mothers, and advertises in national magazines. Nestlé also gives free infant feeding products to hospitals, doctors and other health care workers.

Outside of Canada, Nestlé advertises its products directly to consumers and provides free samples to hospitals, mothers and health care providers. In developing countries infants who are artificially fed risk death due to diarrheal disease by up to 25 times compared to those who are breastfed.

Consumers can send a message to Nestlé that these practices are not acceptable. Don't buy products manufactured by Nestlé, and send the company a letter explaining why you are participating in the boycott.

Write to Nestlé in Canada at:

Nestlé Canada Inc.
25 Sheppard Avenue West
North York, Ontario
M2N 6S8
Phone: 416-512-9000
Fax: 416-218-2654



Examples of Nestlé's International Code Violations

In Canada



Nestlé regularly places advertisements in Canadian parenting magazines. Free samples are distributed to new mothers through doctor's offices and at baby shows. Nestlé's Good Start Program mails information on infant feeding, coupons and samples of formula directly to the homes of new mothers.

In Other Countries

India: In August 2000 Nestlé placed an advertisement in an article called *New Born Care* in the parenting magazine *Meri Saheli*. This violates India's *Infant Milk Substitutes Act (Section 7)*. Almost 50 percent of the article space is dedicated to Nestlé's *Cerelac*. The article undermines breastfeeding and promotes early complementary feeding.

Botswana: Labels on infant formula products were to be compliant with the International Code by March 2000. The Botswanan government reported that labels were not in the required language after that date and also contained information that idealized bottle feeding.

Mexico: Promotion of all Nestlé infant foods is found on advertisements on road signs and billboards in a Mexican village near Xalapa. Nestlé also donates drapes for baby beds and gives health care workers diaries with pictures of Nan. In Mexico and other countries, Nestlé provides funding for paediatricians and nurses for congresses and other professional events.

Bolivia: Nestlé distributes information to health care workers about Nan and Alsoy that does not comply with the Code.

Côte d'Ivoire: Nestlé donates samples of formula to health workers weekly or every two weeks. Most of these samples are passed on to mothers. Also, formula ads are on donated pens.

Pakistan: Nestlé formula is advertised on large posters in the market place. Feeding bowls and building blocks are given as promotional items with the purchase of different Nestlé formulas.

Italy: Discounts for different Nestlé formulas are offered, as are gifts with purchase of cereals. Nestlé distributed a cereal sample in a magazine. Nestlé calendars, clocks and posters are also distributed.

Code violation examples supplied by IBFAN.