



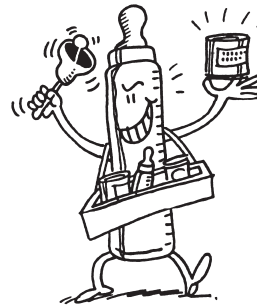
## what you need to know about the international code

Providing accurate information is the cornerstone of promoting breastfeeding. The goal of the World Health Organization International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes is to ensure that only factual information about infant feeding is presented to mothers and those that influence them.

The International Code states that “inappropriate feeding practices lead to malnutrition, morbidity and mortality in all countries, and that improper practices in the marketing of breastmilk substitutes and related products can contribute to these major public health problems...” To protect new parents from commercial interference in making infant feeding choices, the World Health Assembly adopted The Code in 1981.

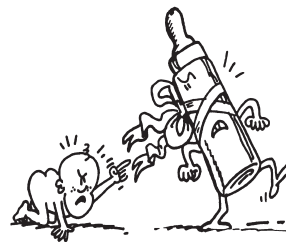
Canada has endorsed the Code and has supported all subsequent infant and young child nutrition resolutions adopted since 1981. However, Canada has not enacted any legislation to control the marketing of breastmilk substitutes. In Canada, Code compliance is voluntary.

The Code ensures that companies that market artificial feeding products follow strict guidelines. For the products that come under the scope of the Code, which include all infant formulas, complementary foods if marketed before the age of six months, bottles and artificial nipples, the following applies:



- No advertising or promotion of these products to the general public.

- No free samples of breastmilk substitutes and related products to pregnant women or new mothers.



- No promotion of these products through the health care system including no free supplies or free samples.

- No gifts or personal samples for health care workers.



- Labels and product literature should explain the benefits of breastfeeding and the costs and hazards of artificial feeding.



- No promotion of products unsuitable for babies.



- No promotion of commercial complementary foods such as jarred baby foods, cereals and juices, that undermine exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months.

- No financial support from infant food manufacturers should be provided to health professionals working in infant and young children health in order to avoid conflict of interest.

The Code states that breastmilk substitutes should be available when they are necessary. There is a “legitimate market for infant formula,” but, “...in view of the vulnerability of infants in the early months of life and the risks involved in inappropriate feeding practices, including the unnecessary and improper use of breastmilk substitutes, the marketing of breastmilk substitutes requires special treatment, which makes usual marketing practices unsuitable for these products.”

Breastfeeding protects both mothers and babies from many illnesses, and the Code protects breastfeeding from the unethical marketing practices of breastmilk substitute manufacturers.