

**INDIAN NATIONAL CODE  
FOR  
PROTECTION AND PROMOTION  
OF  
BREAST-FEEDING**



**GOVERNMENT OF INDIA  
MINISTRY OF SOCIAL WELFARE  
NEW DELHI**

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### Indian National Code for Protection and Promotion of Breast-feeding

The Government of India affirms the right of every child to be adequately nourished as a means of attaining and maintaining health. Infant malnutrition is a major contributory cause of high incidence of infant mortality and physical and mental handicaps. The health of infants and young children cannot be isolated from the health and nutrition of women. The mother and her infant form a biological unit. Breast-feeding is an integral part of the reproductive process. It is the natural and ideal way of feeding the infant and provides a unique biological and emotional basis for healthy child development. The anti-infective properties of breast-milk protect infants against disease. The effect of breast-feeding on child-spacing, on the health and well-being of the mother, on family health, on family and national economy and on food production is well-recognised. Breast-feeding is, therefore, a key aspect of self-reliance and primary health care. It is the nation's responsibility to encourage and protect breast-feeding, and to protect pregnant women and lactating mothers from any influence that could disrupt it. Inappropriate feeding practices lead to infant malnutrition, morbidity and mortality in our children. Promotion of breast-milk substitutes and related products like feeding bottles and teats do constitute a health hazard. Promotion of breast-milk substitutes and related products has been more extensive and pervasive than the promotion of

information concerning the advantages of breast-milk and breast-feeding, and contributes to decline in breast-feeding. In the absence of strong interventions designed to protect, promote and support breast-feeding, it can be anticipated that this decline will continue, and that even larger numbers of infants and young children will be placed at risk of infections, malnutrition and death. Only when young infants cannot be breast-fed, and when other sources of human milk are unavailable, other food becomes necessary. It is important for infants to receive appropriate complementary foods, usually when the infant reaches four to six months of age, and the emphasis should be placed on local foods and traditional practices, complemented only when necessary, and under proper guidance, by industrially processed products. Government appreciates that, guided by the highest considerations for the proper nutrition and health of the World's children, the World Health Assembly adopted in May 1981, an International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes. Government recognises that this code, although an important measure to regulate production and marketing of products which interfere with breast-feeding, is only one aspect of the measures government should undertake to protect and promote the healthy growth and development of infants and young children.

Educational systems, social services, families, communities, women's organisations and other non-governmental organisations should be involved in the protection and promotion of breast-feeding and other activities aimed at the improvement of maternal, infant and young child health and nutrition. In the light of the foregoing considerations, and in view of the vulnerability of infants in the early months of life and the risks involved in the inappropriate feeding practices, including the unnecessary and improper use of breast-milk substitutes and feeding accessories, it is necessary to regulate the marketing of such products. Government, therefore, resolves to adopt the following Code:

## 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.

## Article 2. Scope of the Code

The Code applies to the marketing, and practices related thereto, of the following products: breast-milk substitutes, including infant formula; other milk products, foods and beverages, including bottlefed complementary foods, when marketed or otherwise represented to be suitable, with or without modification, for use as a partial or total replacement of breast-milk; feeding bottles and teats. It also applies to their quality and availability, and to information concerning their use.

## Article 3. Definitions

For the purposes of this Code:

"Breast-milk substitute"	means	any food being marketed or otherwise represented as a partial or total replacement for breast-milk, whether or not suitable for that purpose.
"Complementary food"	means	any food, whether manufactured or locally prepared, suitable as a complement to breast-milk or to infant formula, when either becomes insufficient to satisfy the nutritional requirements of the infant. Such food is also commonly called "weaning food" or "breast-milk supplement".

"Container"	means	any form of packaging of products for sale as a normal retail unit, including wrappers.
"Distributor"	means	a person, corporation or any other entity in the public or private sector engaged in the business (whether directly or indirectly) of marketing at the wholesale or retail level a product within the scope of this Code. A "primary distributor" is a manufacturer's sales agent, representative, national distributor or broker.
"Health care system"	means	governmental, non-governmental or private institutions or organisations engaged, directly or indirectly, in health care for mothers, infants and pregnant women; and nurseries or child-care institutions. It also includes health workers in private practice. For the purpose of this Code, the health care system does not include pharmacies or other established sales outlets.
"Health worker"	means	a person working in a component of such a health care system, whether professional or non-professional, including voluntary, unpaid workers.
"Infant formula"	means	a breast-milk substitute formulated industrially in accordance with applicable ISI standards, to satisfy the normal nutritional

requirements of infants up to between four and six months of age, and adapted to their physiological characteristics. Infant formula may also be prepared at home, in which case it is described as "home prepared".

"Label"	means	any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter, written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or attached to, a container (see above) of any products within the scope of this Code.
"Manufacturer"	means	a corporation or other entity in the public or private sector engaged in the business or function (whether directly or through an agent or through an entity controlled by or under contract with it) of manufacturing a product within the scope of this Code.
"Marketing"	means	product promotion, distribution, selling, advertising, product public relations, and information services.
"Marketing personnel"	means	Any persons whose functions involve the marketing of a product or products coming within the scope of this Code.
"Samples"	means	single or small quantities of a product provided without cost.
"Supplies"	means	quantities of a product provided for use over an extended period, free or at a low price, for special purposes, including those provided to families in need.

## Article 4. Information and education

4.1 Government shall ensure that objective and consistent information is provided on infant and young child feeding for use by families and those involved in the field of infant and young child nutrition. This responsibility shall cover the planning, provision, design and dissemination of information and their control.

4.2 Informational and educational materials, whether written, audio, or visual, dealing with the feeding of infants and intended to reach pregnant women and mothers of infants and young children, should include clear information on all the following points: (a) the benefits and superiority of breast-feeding; (b) maternal nutrition, and the preparation for and maintenance of breast-feeding; (c) the negative effect on breast-feeding of introducing partial bottle-feeding; (d) the difficulty of reversing the decision not to breast-feed; and (e) where needed, the proper use of infant formula, whether manufactured industrially or home-prepared. When such materials contain information about the use of infant formula, they should include the social and financial implications of its use; the health hazards of inappropriate foods or feeding methods; and, in particular, the health hazards of unnecessary or improper use of infant formula and other breast-milk substitutes. Such materials should not use any pictures or text which may idealize the use of breast-milk substitutes.

4.3 Donations of informational or educational equipment or materials by manufacturers or distributors should be made only at the request and with the written approval of the appropriate government authority or within guidelines given by government for this purpose. Such equipment or materials may bear the donating company's name or logo, but should not refer to a proprietary product that is within the scope of this Code, and should be distributed only through the health care system.

## Article 5. The general public and mothers

5.1 There shall be no advertising or other form of promotion to the general public of products within the scope of this Code.

5.2 Manufacturers and distributors should not provide, directly or indirectly, to anybody, samples of products within the scope of this Code.

5.3 In conformity with paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article, there should be no point-of-sale advertising, giving of samples, or any other promotion device to induce sales directly to the consumer at the retail level, such as special displays, discount coupons, premiums, special sales, loss-leaders and tie-in-sales, for products within the scope of this Code. This provision should not restrict the establishment of pricing policies and practices intended to provide products at lower prices on a long-term basis.

5.4 Manufacturers and distributors should not distribute to pregnant women or mothers of infants and young children any gifts of articles or utensils which may promote the use of breast-milk substitutes or bottle-feeding.

5.5 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.

## Article 6. Health care systems

6.1 The health authorities in the country should take appropriate measures to encourage and protect breast-feeding and promote the principles of this Code, and should give appropriate information and advice to health workers in regard to their responsibilities, including the information specified in Article 4.2.



6.2 No facility of a health care system should be used for the purpose of promoting infant formula or other products within the scope of this Code. This Code does not, however, preclude the dissemination of information to health professionals as provided in Article 7.2.

6.3 Facilities of health care systems should not be used for the display of products within the scope of this Code, for placards or posters concerning such products, or for the distribution of material provided by a manufacturer or distributor other than that specified in Article 4.3.

6.4 The use by the health care system of "professional service representatives", "mothercraft nurses" or similar personnel, provided or paid for by manufacturers or distributors, should not be permitted.

6.5 Feeding with infant formula, whether manufactured or home-prepared, should be demonstrated only by health workers, or other community workers if necessary; and only to the mothers or family members who need to use it; and the information given should include a clear explanation of the hazards of improper use.

6.6 Donations or low-price sales to institutions or organizations of supplies of infant formula or other products within the scope of this Code, whether for use in the institutions or for distribution outside them intended for the recuperation of malnourished children and other medical reasons or for the infants of mothers who cannot breast-feed and who cannot afford to purchase adequate amounts, may be made. If these supplies are distributed for use outside the institutions, this should be done only by the institutions or organisations concerned. Such donations or low-price sales should not be used by manufacturers or distributors as a sales inducement.

6.7 Where donated supplies of infant formula or other products within the scope of this Code are distributed outside

an institution, the institution or organization should take steps to ensure that supplies can be continued as long as the infants concerned need them. Donors, as well as institutions or organizations concerned, should bear in mind this responsibility.

6.8 Equipment and materials, in addition to those referred to in Article 4.3, donated to a health care system may bear a company's name or logo, but should not refer to any proprietary product within the scope of this Code.

## Article 7. Health workers

7.1 Health workers should encourage and protect breast-feeding; and those who are concerned in particular with maternal and infant nutrition should make themselves familiar with their responsibilities under this Code, including the information specified in Article 4.2.

7.2 Information provided by manufacturers and distributors to health professionals regarding products within the scope of this Code should be restricted to scientific and factual matters, and such information should not imply or create a belief that bottle-feeding is equivalent or superior to breast-feeding. It should also include the information specified in Article 4.2.

7.3 No financial or material inducements to promote products within the scope of this Code should be offered by manufacturers or distributors to health workers or members of their families, nor should these be accepted by health workers or members of their families.

7.4 Manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of this Code should disclose to the institution to which a recipient health worker is affiliated any contribution made to him or on his behalf for fellowships, study tours, research grants, attendance at professional conferences, or the like. Similar disclosures should be made by the recipient.

## Article 8. Persons employed by manufacturers and distributors

8.1 In systems of sales incentives for marketing personnel, the volume of sales of products within the scope of this Code should not be included in the calculation of bonuses, nor should quotas be set specifically for sales of these products. This should not be understood to prevent the payment of bonuses based on the overall sales by a company of other products marketed by it.

8.2 Personnel employed in marketing products within the scope of this Code should not, as part of their job responsibilities, perform educational functions in relation to pregnant women or mothers of infants and young children. This should not be understood as preventing such personnel from being used for other functions by the health care system at the request and with the written approval of the appropriate authority of the government concerned.

## Article 9. Labelling

9.1 Labels should be designed to provide the necessary information about the appropriate use of the product, and so as not to discourage breast-feeding.

9.2 Manufacturers and distributors of infant formula should ensure that each container has a clear, conspicuous, and easily readable and understandable message printed on it, or on a label which cannot readily become separated from it, in an appropriate language, which includes all the following points:

- (a) the words "Important Notice" or their equivalent;
- (b) a statement of the superiority of breast-feeding;
- (c) a statement that the product should be used only on the advice of a health worker as to the need for its use and the proper method of use;

(d) instructions for appropriate preparation, and a warning against the health hazards of inappropriate preparation. Neither the container nor the label should have pictures of infants, nor should they have other pictures or text which may idealize the use of infant formula. They may, however, have graphics for illustrating methods of preparation. The terms "humanized", "maternalized" or similar terms should not be used. Inserts giving additional information about the product and its proper use, subject to the above conditions, may be included in the package or retail unit. When labels give instructions for modifying a product into infant formula, the above should apply.

9.3 Food products within the scope of this Code, marketed for infant feeding, which do not meet all the requirements of an infant formula, but which can be modified to do so, should carry on the label a warning that the unmodified product should not be the sole source of nourishment of an infant. Since sweetened condensed milk is not suitable for infant feeding, nor for use as a main ingredient of infant formula, its label should not contain purported instructions on how to modify it for that purpose.

9.4 The label of food products within the scope of this Code should also state all the following points: (a) the ingredients used; (b) the composition/analysis of the product; (c) the storage conditions required; and (d) the batch number and the date before which the product is to be consumed, taking into account the climatic and storage conditions of the country.

## Article 10. Quality

10.1 The quality of products is an essential element for the protection of the health of infants and therefore should be of a high recognized standard.

10.2 Food products within the scope of this Code should,

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when sold or otherwise distributed, meet applicable ISI standards.

## Article 11. Implementation and monitoring

11.1 Government shall give effect to the principles and aim of this Code through legislation and other suitable measures. National policies and measures, including laws, which are adopted to give effect to the principles and aim of this Code, shall be publicly stated, and shall apply on the same basis to all those involved in the manufacture and marketing of products within the scope of this Code.

11.2 The manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of this Code, and appropriate non-governmental organizations, professional groups, and consumer organisations are expected to collaborate with government in the implementation of this Code.

11.3 Independently of any other measures taken for implementation of this Code, manufacturers and distributors of products within the scope of this Code should regard themselves as responsible for monitoring their marketing practices according to the principles and aim of this Code, and for taking steps to ensure that their conduct at every level conforms to them.

11.4 Non-governmental organizations, professional groups, institutions, and individuals concerned should draw the attention of manufacturers or distributors to activities which are incompatible with the principles and aim of this Code, so that appropriate action can be taken. The appropriate governmental authority should also be informed.

11.5 Manufacturers and primary distributors of products within the scope of this Code should apprise each member of their marketing personnel of the Code and of their responsibilities under it.