



Baby Feeding Law Group Ireland

Breastfeeding welcome here? No thanks! Breastfeeding welcome everywhere

Leading health advocate organisation denounces Danone's attempt to make breastfeeding appear a niche activity.

The Baby Feeding Law Group Ireland (BFLGI) is dismayed to see infant formula company Danone distribute "breastfeeding welcome here" signs to cafés and restaurants in Ireland.

Mothers are legally entitled to breastfeed in any public place in Ireland.

This campaign is merely a marketing ploy aimed at creating brand loyalty for Danone products. Breastfeeding is welcome everywhere in Ireland; it is the law. Signage, from a commercial company involved in the production and distribution of infant formula, suggesting that breastfeeding is only welcome in some places is unnecessary. To do so implies that breastfeeding is less acceptable in public places than feeding with a bottle of artificial baby milk.

All mothers need to know that breastfeeding is normal and that they have a legal right to breastfeed, free from harassment, in any public place in Ireland. Women and their families can complain if a business owner fails to protect this right. The campaign could result in some mothers feeling that they are not allowed to breastfeed in premises that do not display the sticker. Similarly business owners may believe that protecting breastfeeding mothers is optional.

Infant feeding in Ireland

Ireland has one of the lowest rates of breastfeeding in the world while the global baby formula business is estimated to be worth \$45 billion per year. Formula producers invest heavily in marketing tactics including the cynical embracing of breastfeeding and courting of health professionals.

Unbiased information

The World Health Organization (WHO) and HSE Breastfeeding Policy state that parents should receive infant feeding information from commercial-free sources. Support for breastfeeding should come from healthcare workers who should themselves receive unbiased education on infant feeding. Mary Higgins, Chairperson of BFLGI concludes: "We want to ensure that all parents have access to accurate information on infant feeding free from commercial influence. BFLGI does not accept that showing stickers in café windows is supportive of parents who are breastfeeding but instead provides a marketing opportunity for Danone."

Release endorsed by IBFAN Ireland and Ethical Sponsorship Ireland

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Boilerplate

The Baby Feeding Law Group Ireland is an affiliate group made up of professional and voluntary organisations with an interest in infant and young child feeding.

Danone continues to market its follow-on milks and toddler milks in contravention of the WHO International Code on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes along with subsequent WHA Resolutions. The WHO and others have stated that milks aimed at older babies are unnecessary products.

Formula manufacturers consistently imply that their products are just as good as breast-milk by clever use of branding, advertising, sponsorship of events and by celebrity and professional endorsements. It is neither appropriate nor helpful for parents to be targeted by industry in this manner as outlined in the WHO guidelines.

Expectant and new mothers are asked to consider carefully why Danone, a global producer of infant formula with two brands on sale in Ireland, has decided to initiate this campaign and to reflect on the purpose of its wider First 1000 Days campaign. The First Thousand Days concept began from the research work of UK epidemiologist, David Barker who, three decades ago, identified the importance of nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood. Many organisations worldwide, both altruistic and commercial, have utilised the 1000 days concept.

Parents are encouraged to register with the associated website, which does not make it clear this is an initiative from a formula company, unless people read the terms and conditions where it says all information they enter, including their Facebook profile, can be used by Danone Early Life Nutrition. Although purporting to be a health information service, the legal disclaimer states: "Danone Early Life Nutrition disclaims all liability and responsibility arising from reliance on the information for any purpose."

Links

Human rights and equality law

<http://www.ihrec.ie/your-rights/>
<https://www.breastfeeding.ie/As-baby-grows/Breastfeeding-Out-and-About/>

Impact of formula marketing on breastfeeding

[http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(15\)01044-2/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(15)01044-2/fulltext)

Information on infant milks

<http://www.firststepsnutrition.org>

Follow-on milks

<http://www.babymilkaction.org/archives/704>

<http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736%2816%2930599-2/fulltext>

http://www.who.int/nutrition/topics/WHO_brief_fufandcode_post_17July.pdf

FSNT statement on toddler milks

[https://gallery.mailchimp.com/b5d5946d6b771444cb429c0b1/files/Statement_on_sugar_in_fortified_milks_May2016.pdf?ct=t\(Newsletters_2014_September9_17_2014\)](https://gallery.mailchimp.com/b5d5946d6b771444cb429c0b1/files/Statement_on_sugar_in_fortified_milks_May2016.pdf?ct=t(Newsletters_2014_September9_17_2014))

HSE Breastfeeding Policy

<https://www.breastfeeding.ie/Uploads/files/Breastfeeding-Policy-for-Primary-Care-Teams-and-Community-Healthcare-Organisations.pdf>

WHO International Code on the marketing of breast-milk substitutes (WHO, 1981)

<http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/9241541601/en/>

Summary of WHA Resolutions since the WHO International Code

http://ibfan.org/art/WHA_resolutions-from-code-essentials.pdf

Breastfeeding in Ireland Strategic Action Plan 2005-2010

<https://www.breastfeeding.ie/uploads/files/ACTIONplan.pdf>

IBFAN Ireland blog

<https://ibfanireland.wordpress.com/2016/05/29/breastfeeding-welcome-here-sticker-campaign-by-danone-maker-of-aptamil-and-cg-infant-formulae/>