

Minbie

Evidence of violations of the *International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes* and subsequent, relevant Resolutions

Notable marketing claims

*Introduce it as early as day 1
- Nurtures a proper
breastfeeding latch*

SUMMARY OF CONCERNS



Unfortunately current UK marketing regulations do not cover feeding bottles and teats.

However, the *Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations (2007)* do state that “No person shall produce or publish any informational or educational material, whether written or audiovisual, dealing with the feeding of infants and intended to reach pregnant women and mothers of infants and young children, unless that material includes clear information...” The list of information includes “the possible negative effect on breast-feeding of introducing partial bottle-feeding”.

Accordingly, it may be possible for enforcement officers to issue *Improvement Notices* or bring prosecutions over Minbie information that promotes its bottles as equivalent to breastfeeding without giving the required information.

. Breaks the Code .

. Strengthen the Law .

Examples of advertising in the *Breaks the Code* - *Strengthen the Law* boxes are not permitted under the *International Code* and Resolutions adopted by the World Health Assembly. These measures do cover feeding bottles and teats and state “there should be no advertising or other form of promotion to the general public of products within the scope of this Code”.

Companies should follow these standards independently of national measures, but the specific provisions need to be included in UK law to make them legally binding.

Baby Milk Action has sent this profile to the company and will update it if action is taken.

RESPONSES

Baby Milk Action received a response from the company on 26 April 2017 after contacting it via the Minbie website for a comment, particularly on any changes it would make. It defended its marketing practices, stating, “The Minbie was designed to encourage and protect breast-feeding”. The full response is available on our website and as an annex to the printed report.

In subsequent email correspondence, the company said it has removed the social media video encouraging mothers to introduce feeding bottles from day 1 shown on this page, but has given no undertaking over the other practices shown.

COMPANY HISTORY

The Minbie website gives the company behind the brand as I-Sip Trading Pty Ltd, with an Australian Business Number, registered in 2006. Nothing has been found on UK Companies House website for this company or Minbie.

ENCOURAGING BOTTLE FEEDING FROM BIRTH

Baby Milk Action was contacted in March 2017 by numerous people complaining about a sponsored post appearing in their Facebook feeds for the Minbie teat.



Minbie Facebook page, February 2017

In the advertisement, a mother feeding a baby speaks about the bottle. The subtitles are as follows (emphasis as in the subtitles):

Tip for you here! If you're going to mix feeding don't leave **bottlefeeding too late!** With the Minbie you could **introduce it as early as day 1** if you wanted!

The Minbie helps with the **latch on process** and doesn't **confuse the baby**. They're quite happy to go **from breast to bottle**. Make sure you have lots of **cuddles with your baby** as they do love that!

Also your **partner can feed** with this as well, which takes pressure off you!

Last of all remember everything is just a phase and it will all be **ok in the end!**

Especially if you have Minbie!

. Breaks the Code .

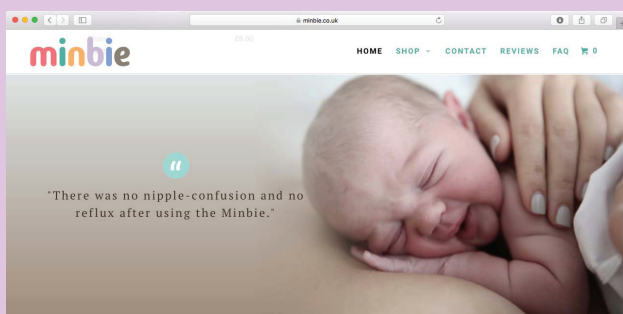
. Strengthen the Law .

. Breaks the Code .

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The Code prohibits promotion of feeding bottles and teats. If the Minbie website is viewed as information rather than advertising, it should include important information, both under the Code and under UK law.

No information has been found on the possible negative effect on breastfeeding of introducing partial bottle feeding. Rather, the home page of the Minbie website claims “no nipple confusion” and “no reflux after using Minbie”.

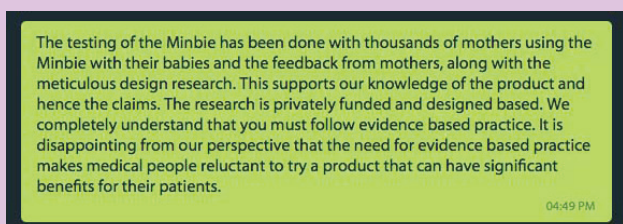


On the Frequently Asked Questions page, a graphic claims the teat “Nurtures a proper breastfeeding latch” and “Strengthens breastfeeding coordination”.



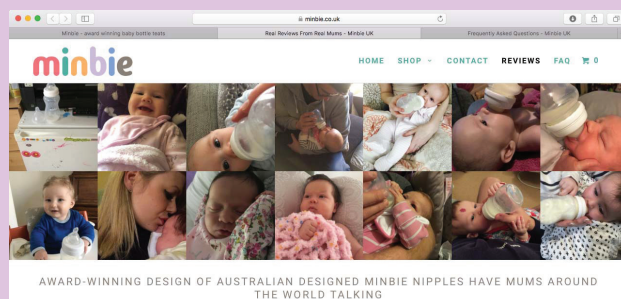
A chat window appears on every page, so to monitor the information parents are given, Baby Milk Action asked: “Can you send me the scientific references for the claims that Minbie is the closest nipple to breastfeeding and that there is no nipple confusion?”

The reply seemed to be a standard one as it assumed the question came from a health worker.

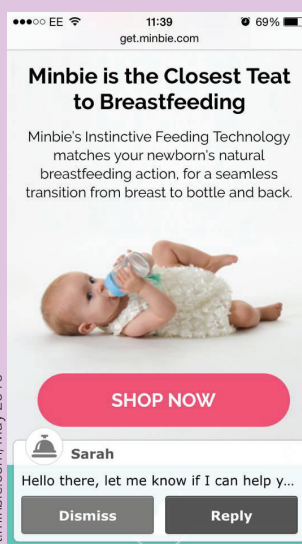
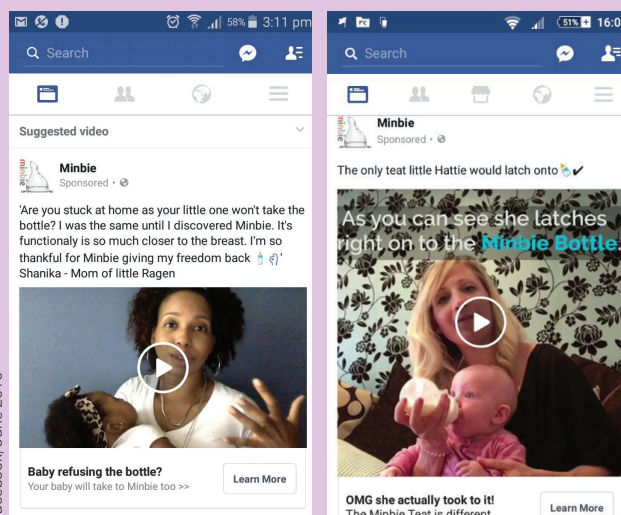


It is sometimes said that artificial feeding is a mass uncontrolled trial on babies, which is how the company says it has tested its Minbie teat.

Minbie promotion is based on customer endorsements. The company encourages people to post reviews.



Endorsements supplied as video clips are used as sponsored posts on social media.



Minbie is promoted as the “Closest Teat to Breastfeeding” for “a seamless transition from breast to bottle and back”.

It is suckling at the breast and removal of milk that stimulates milk supply. NHS Choices and not-for-profit mother support groups do provide information on how to combine breastfeeding and bottle feeding.

They warn that introducing bottles may reduce milk production, particularly if doing so before breastfeeding is established.

Other companies claim their teats are first choice for combined feeding. With no controls on such claims, who can parents believe?

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