What is Baby Milk Action?

Baby Milk Action, as part of a global network, acts to stop misleading marketing by the baby feeding industry. We protect breastfeeding and babies fed on formula to prevent unnecessary illness, death and suffering.

We are a not-for-profit organisation and, to preserve our independence, we take no corporate funding. We are funded by development organisations, charitable trusts, our members and supporters. We are the UK member of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN), consisting of more than 270 groups in over 160 countries.

Join or donate to Baby Milk Action

Your support is essential to keep us going as an independent organisation. To become a member or donate online visit: www.babymilkaction.org/shop

Annual membership is £12 unwaged, £36 waged, £48 family. There is also a pay monthly option. Organisations can affiliate (fee depends on turnover).

Alternatively, send a cheque to the address below with your name and contact details or telephone us with card details.

Policy

Contact Patti Rundall OBE, our Policy Director for information on how we help governments and the United Nations bring in policies to protect children. prundall@babymilkaction.org

Our Patrons

Hollie McNish, one of Britain's most exciting poets, is best known for her poem Embarrassed and the collection Nobody Told Me that won the Ted Hughes Award for New Work in Poetry.

Gabrielle Palmer, nutritionist and author of the groundbreaking Politics of Breastfeeding, a book that has never been out of print since it was first published in 1988. Gabrielle was a founder of Baby Milk Action.

Protecting breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the cornerstone of child survival. There is no food more locally produced or sustainable than breastmilk. A breastfed child is less likely to suffer from gastroenteritis, respiratory and ear infections and other illnesses.

In areas with poor water, sanitation or health care, improved breastfeeding practices and reduction of artificial feeding could save 800,000 children's lives a year - 1 baby every 40 seconds - more than would be saved by the provision of adequate water, sanitation and vaccination.

Protecting babies fed on formula

Breastmilk substitutes are legitimate products, but must be marketed appropriately. We work to protect the right of all families and health workers to accurate, independent information on infant feeding. The International Code requires companies to comply with its provisions on composition, labelling and marketing, independently of government action, so that the risks of artificial feeding are minimised.

We are not anti-formula - just anti-irresponsible marketing
Helping the public to force changes

Nestlé is the world’s largest food company and uses its power to drive down standards and grow a lucrative market expected to be worth $70bn by 2019. The Nestlé boycott and the laws that we’ve helped bring in have stopped some dangerous tactics, but Nestlé and other baby feeding companies such as Danone, Abbott, Reckitt Benkiser/Mead Johnson continue to market in ways that mislead and harm child health. A key tactic is to pour funds into marketing that masquerades as ‘education’. Through such sponsorship companies pretend that they will ‘protect’ babies or make them cleverer. In the UK, but not everywhere, companies must admit that formula is not sterile and may contain harmful bacteria.

Countering risky trade agreements

We help governments deconstruct industry arguments and resist the ‘chilling’ effect that the prospect of new trade agreements is having. Governments have a sovereign right and duty to protect child health. Over 70 countries have now introduced laws implementing the International Code and Resolutions, but the industry continues to fight “a rearguard action against regulation on a country-by-country basis” (Euromonitor 2008). Laws can have a marked impact on formula sales, breastfeeding rates and health. Kenya brought in a strong law in 2012 with IBFAN’s help. The Kenyan national survey shows that by 2014 exclusive breastfeeding rates almost doubled from 2008/9 (up from 32% to 61%). This contributed towards the reduction of infant mortality from 52/1000 to 39/1000.

Training & monitoring the regulations

We offer online training to our supporters and other organisations on monitoring the International Code and Resolutions and taking action.

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Protecting health in emergencies

We helped bring about the adoption of the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes at the 1981 World Health Assembly, the first global tool to control marketing. We work with health ministries at the Assembly to bring in new Resolutions that keep pace with marketing practices and scientific knowledge. We work to improve the safety and quality of baby foods and integrate the Code and Resolutions into global trading standards and Guidance for Emergency Relief workers.

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