

What is Baby Milk Action/IBFAN UK?

Baby Milk Action is the UK member of the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN) that has been working since 1979 to stop misleading marketing by the baby feeding industry. As one of the longest running single issue groups, our aim is to protect breastfeeding and babies fed on formula to prevent unnecessary illness, death and suffering. We are not-for-profit and to preserve our independence we take no corporate funding and are funded mainly by our members, supporters and charitable trusts. IBFAN has 270 groups in over 160 countries.



Your support helps us to monitor companies, work for strong laws and expose conflicts of interest. Above left: Carbon Footprint of Formula, Status of the Code Report, WHO/UNICEF/IBFAN. Above right: Patti being interviewed about Nestlé on CNN Mexico.

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 over 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 and young child 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.

Join or donate to Baby Milk Action

Your support is essential to keep us going as an independent organisation. From our online shop you can buy materials, become a member or donate: 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).

Donations can be made direct to Baby Milk Action's bank (Account number: 50588718 Sort Code: 08 90 43) or via PayPal (as a guest).

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 a founder of Baby Milk Action. is the author of the groundbreaking *Politics of Breastfeeding*, a book that has never been out of print since it was first

Monitoring and Support



If you see harmful marketing report it! Caroline Harrower, who coordinates our volunteer monitoring team, will help you. monitoring@babymilkaction.org

Baby Milk Action
Email: info@babymilkaction.org
www.babymilkaction.org



We are not anti-formula – we
are anti-irresponsible marketing



What we do & How to help us

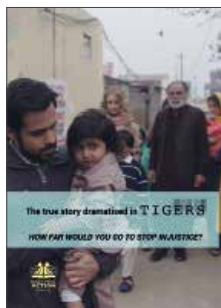
Protecting breastfeeding
Protecting babies fed on formula

Holding companies to account

Baby Milk Action reminds governments of their duty to protect the right of parents to accurate, independent information and support on infant and young child feeding, whether they are breastfeeding or using formula. With our IBFAN partners we monitor baby feeding companies against internationally agreed marketing standards.

Working for strong marketing laws

We have helped bring in laws in the UK, the European Union and many other countries. These laws are stopping harmful misleading marketing practices and ensuring that products are safer, contain less sugar and additives and are properly labelled. But there is still much more to do. Corporations lobby governments in order to weaken legislation and continue harmful marketing totally unnecessary and risky formulas for older babies, often sold in single use plastic packaging. The products look just like formulas for newborn babies (infant formula) – a deceptive practice called cross branding that contravenes WHO guidelines.



The feature film *Tigers* dramatises the true story of a Nestlé baby milk salesman from Pakistan who exposed unethical marketing practices with our help. Nestlé is the target of an international boycott.

'Here today - gone tomorrow' promises

Nestlé is the world's largest food company and uses its power to drive down standards and expand its lucrative market. The Nestlé boycott and the laws that we've helped bring in have stopped many dangerous practices, but Nestlé and other companies such as Danone, Abbott and Reckitt Benkiser/Mead Johnson won't stop unless they are forced to. Meanwhile they use clever marketing and *'here today, gone tomorrow'* promises to pretend that they can be trusted as partners in child and planetary health. A key tactic is to pour funds into marketing that masquerades as 'education'.

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. As members of the Emergency Nutrition Network, we are co-authors of the Guidance for Emergency Relief workers that helps ensure that emergency responses do not undermine breastfeeding.



We work with IBFAN, UNICEF, WHO and partners to protect babies during emergencies where breastfeeding is a lifeline. Appeals for help in emergencies can be misleading. Companies exploit this with donations that can do more harm than good..

IBFAN volunteers helping Filipino mothers after Typhoon Yolanda.
Photo: Arugaan, Philippines

Countering risky trade agreements

For over 20 years we have attended UN meetings (called Codex) where global trading standards for food are set: we expose the lack of conflict of interest safeguards; improve the safety and quality of baby foods and ensure the integration of the Code and Resolutions into the standards. We help governments deconstruct industry arguments and remind them of their sovereign right and duty to protect child health. Over 70 countries have now introduced laws implementing the International Code and Resolutions, that are having a marked impact on formula sales, breastfeeding rates and health. In 2012 Kenya brought in a strong law with IBFAN's help. According to the Kenyan national survey, 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.

Monitoring the regulations

Our volunteer team, coordinated by Caroline Harrower, encourages the public to report Code violations to Trading Standards and the Advertising Standards Authority. We have won several cases against misleading advertising. We are also members of WHO's global NetCode monitoring initiative.

The Baby Feeding Law Group

The Baby Feeding Law Group (BFLG) that we founded in 1997 is the umbrella for all those working to bring EU and UK legislation into line with the International Code and Resolutions. 24 health professional and mother support organisations meet 4 times a year.

Conflicts of Interest

We speak out about company influence and malpractice. In 2000 we helped change the conflicts of interest rules governing scientific advisors in Europe. In June 2011 we helped launch the Conflict of Interest Coalition at the United Nations. It is supported by 162 organisations and networks representing over 2,000 groups. We highlight the risks of Multi-Stakeholder Partnerships, with the aim of safeguarding public health policy-making from undue commercial influence. We help professional bodies improve their policies. In 2019 the British Medical Journal and the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health decided not take funding from formula companies.



Above: Launching the Conflict of Interest Coalition at the United Nations.
Left: IBFAN/ICDC's Breaking the Rules global monitoring report, 2017.

Green Feeding and the climate emergency

Since before 1991 we have been highlighting the damage caused to the environment by the production, distribution and unnecessary use of formulas. With our IBFAN partners we remind governments of their duty to address this crisis.

Resources and membership

You can help by sharing our information on social media, becoming a member, sending a donation or buying materials such as the IBFAN Calendar 2020 or Tigers DVD.