

The Baby Grow Guide to

The WHO Code



Who this book is for?

BabySpace and Code Monitoring NI have created this ebook for parents as a way to provide accessible, clear and factual information around what the WHO Code for Marketing of Breastmilk alternatives is, and in what ways it affects them and their families.

Who made this book?

Baby Grow is a new initiative from Breastival. It's mission is to assist pregnant and new mothers and their families to adapt to parenthood. Baby Space values breastfeeding & understands the important role it plays in supporting health and well-being but recognises that many women still face barriers.

Code Monitoring NI are concerned about unethical marketing of infant formula products and are campaigning for full implementation of the WHO Code into law in N. Ireland.

[@breastivalni](#) [@WHOCodNI](#)

Where does this information come from?

This information has been collated from a range of sources including - The [World Health Organisation](#), [Kellysmom.com](#), [FSC Hert](#), [Code Monitoring NI](#) and [BFLGUK](#).

What is the WHO Code?

The WHO Code (or The International Code of Marketing of Breast-Milk Substitutes) is a set of recommendations (designed by The World Health Organization) to regulate the marketing of breast-milk substitutes, feeding bottles and teats. It is a set of voluntary regulations agreed by all formula companies and nearly all countries of the world.

The Aim of the Code is to protect and promote breastfeeding whilst protecting parents from the aggressive and often inappropriate marketing of breast-milk substitutes.





Who does it protect?

It protects Breastfeeding and Infant Formula feeding babies and their parents. The Code tries to level the playing field in relation to infant feeding choices.

It also protects professionals (and retailers and manufacturers). Baby clubs, influencers, sponsored research and education all need regulation.

It aims to create an overall environment which enables parents to make the best possible feeding choice, based on impartial information and free of commercial influence.

What does The Code Cover?

The Code covers all breastmilk substitutes, which includes foods and beverages such as:

- Infant formula
- Follow on milks
- Other milk products
- Bottles and teats
- Soothers/dummies/pacifiers
- Baby juices and tea
- Cereals and vegetables mixes.

WHO recommends exclusive breastfeeding to six months and then continue breastfeeding along with introduction of solids. All complementary foods marketed for use before six months are breastmilk substitutes.

The full Code doesn't just cover products for the first 6 months (that's the current UK regulations) - but because of subsequent WHA resolutions, the Code should cover young child feeding until 36 months + the other products.

Why do we need it?

The regulations are in place to protect families from the aggressive and often inappropriate marketing of large profit making companies. Instead of advertising hype, parents who use Infant Formula deserve to receive unbiased, factual information.

Who should be following it?

The Code is primarily aimed at governments and companies. Health care workers, facilities, charities and support networks also have a role to play.

What the Code does and does not do:

- It does not advocate against parents choosing to use Infant formula.
- It does not suggest that formula sales to the public should be limited.
- It does require that parents be given complete and factual information about infant feeding including, when applicable, how to properly and safely prepare infant formula.
- It does require that infant formula meet strict quality standards, that the label include clear instructions for safe preparation, and that inappropriate foods (such as canned milk, rice milk, etc.) not be advertised for use as the sole source of nourishment for babies.
- It does say that companies should stop marketing practices that undermine breastfeeding and prevent mothers from meeting their own breastfeeding goals.
- It does say that, instead of advertising hype, parents who use formula should receive unbiased, factual information.

What should I do if I see a violation?

If you see a violation you can:

- Report directly to Baby Milk Action (who use examples to campaign for better enforcement of the WHO Code);
- If the violation is also a breach of local regulations you can make a complaint to the Environmental Health Officer in the Council area in which breach occurs;
- If the breach occurs on radio, TV or online, you can contact the Advertising Standards Agency;
- If you notice inappropriate product placement/marketing of baby formula products including follow-on formula on TV, you can contact Ofcom
- Online breaches of the Code can also be reported directly to the platform eg Facebook.
- Report any Code Violations in Northern Ireland to Code Monitoring NI.





Baby Grow



Where can I find more information?

- [Baby Milk Action](#)
- [Baby Feeding Law Group UK](#)
- [Code Monitoring NI Facebook Group](#)
- [World Health Organization](#)
- [First Steps Nutrition](#)
- [UNICEF](#)
- [Breastival](#)