

# The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and Subsequent Resolutions

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## Introduction

### What is the International Code?

The **International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes** was adopted by a Resolution (WHA34.22) of the World Health Assembly in 1981.

The International Code bans all promotion of bottle feeding and sets out requirements for labelling and information on infant feeding. Any activity which undermines breastfeeding also violates the aim and spirit of the Code. The Code and its subsequent World Health Assembly Resolutions are intended as a minimum requirement in all countries.

### What is covered?

All breastmilk substitutes. These are products which are marketed in a way which suggests they should replace breastfeeding, even if the product is not suitable for that purpose. They may include:

- infant formula
- follow-on formula
- baby foods
- gruels
- teas and juices
- bottles
- teats/nipples and related equipment.

### Key points:

Baby food companies may not:

- promote their products in hospitals, shops or to the general public
- give free samples to mothers or free or subsidised supplies to hospitals or maternity wards
- give gifts to health workers or mothers
- promote their products to health workers: any information provided by companies must contain only scientific and factual matters
- promote foods or drinks for babies
- give misleading information
- There should be no contact between baby milk company sales personnel and mothers.

- Labels must be in a language understood by the mother and must include a clear health warning.
- Baby pictures may not be shown on baby milk labels.
- The labels must not include language which idealises the use of the product.

## Resolutions

When the International Code was adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1981 (see **Resolution WHA34.22**) it was recognised that it may require clarification or even revision. Accordingly Resolutions have been adopted every 2 years since 1982. The subsequent Resolutions have equal status to the International Code and close many of the loopholes exploited by the baby food industry.

The following resolutions are available.

- **Resolution WHA33.32 (1980)**
- **Resolution WHA34.22 (1981)**
- **Resolution WHA35.26 (1982)**
- **Resolution WHA37.30 (1984)**
- **Resolution WHA39.28 (1986)**
- **Resolution WHA41.11 (1988)**
- **Resolution WHA43.3 (1990)**
- **Resolution WHA45.34 (1992)**
- **Resolution WHA47.5 (1994)**
- **Resolution WHA49.15 (1996)**
- **Resolution WHA54.2 (2001)**
- **Resolution WHA55.25 (2002)**
- **Resolution WHA58.32 (2005)**
- **Resolution WHA59.21 (2006)**

## Innocenti Declaration 1990

The **Innocenti Declaration 1990** was produced and adopted by participants at the WHO/UNICEF policymakers' meeting on "Breastfeeding in the 1990s: A Global Initiative", co-sponsored by the United States Agency for International Development (A.I.D.) and the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA), held at the Spedale degli Innocenti, Florence, Italy, on 30 July - 1 August 1990. The Declaration reflects the content of the original background document for the meeting and the views expressed in group and plenary sessions.

## Innocenti Declaration 2005

The **Innocenti Declaration 2005** was adopted by participants at an event "Celebrating Innocenti 1990-2005: Achievements, Challenges and Future Imperatives" held in November 2005.