

CODE WATCH

25 YEARS OF PROTECTING
BREASTFEEDING



WORLD BREASTFEEDING WEEK
1-7 AUGUST

**'Inappropriate feeding practices
remain the greatest threat to child
health and survival globally'**

Innocenti Declaration on infant
and young child feeding 2005

WABA 2006

Introduction

- You may be a parent, a health professional or a policy maker. You may be supporting mothers to breastfeed or are concerned about society's health, or both. Whatever your role your work is vital. Good infant feeding practices are the foundation of a healthy life. They affect infant and young child survival and the long-term health of every adult.
- You will have noticed that baby food, bottle and teat companies promote their products. This marketing directly contravenes the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes (the Code) which was adopted as a World Health Assembly resolution in 1981. If the Code is ignored, your work for breastfeeding will be more difficult.
- The Code and subsequent infant feeding resolutions play a key part in the Global Strategy for Infant and Young Child Feeding adopted at the World Health Assembly (WHA) in 2002.
- Our governments are committed to the Code, but powerful companies pressure them to evade it. Without the Code in place, initiatives for babies' health and survival are undermined. Few governments have Code information campaigns, so people feel unsure about it and some may be unaware of its existence.
- The Code is really very simple. Anyone can learn to monitor it. During this World Breastfeeding Week we want to take action for Code implementation. This can make a huge difference to mothers and babies and to the families, caregivers and health professionals working to protect all infants and young children.

This folder shares:

- why the Code is important
- the basic facts of the Code
- examples of success and
- action ideas.



Why the Code is important

For most babies, exclusive breastfeeding for six months followed by continued breastfeeding, together with nutritious complementary foods, for two years or beyond is the key to health. Nearly all women can breastfeed if they are supported to be confident and aware of good techniques. Promotional practices undermine these skills through subtle marketing tricks and misinformation to health professionals, mothers and their families. Code implementation can stop this.

Thanks to the work of people like you, breastfeeding rates are gradually increasing. Worldwide, more women are exclusively breastfeeding during the first six months. But even where breastfeeding is part of the culture, practices can be less than ideal and where artificial feeding is widespread, they can be appalling. Delaying and restricting breastfeeds and giving other food and drinks before six months are still common practices. These reduce breastmilk supply and increase a baby's risk of infection.

A millionaire's baby who is not breastfed is less healthy than an exclusively breastfed baby whose mother is in the poorest social group.

Professor J. Stewart Forsyth, Ninewells Hospital
and Medical School, Dundee, Scotland, UK, 2006.