

IMS Act

The Infant Milk Substitutes (IMS), Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Amendment Act, 2003

THE IMS ACT PROHIBITS

- Advertising and promotion of infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, or infant foods.
- Unauthorized labelling of products, including complementary foods, such as the use of images of mothers and children or words that imply superiority to breastmilk.
- Supply and distribution of infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, or infant foods.
- Educational materials, including advertisements, that promote infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, and infant foods.
- Sponsorships, gifts, fellowships, and financial benefits to health care providers and their associations.



BREASTFEEDING SAVES LIVES AND IMPROVES HEALTH OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES, AND NATIONS!

Initiating
breastfeeding
within one
hour of birth
can

prevent about
20%
of new-born deaths

Exclusive
breastfeeding
can save lives
annually of

820,000

< 5 children

Infants
exclusively
breasted for six
months are

less likely to die
from diarrhoea
11X
less likely to die
from pneumonia
15X

YET

in India, each year thousands of
children's lives are put at risk from
poor breastfeeding and infant feeding
practices. National data shows that only:



42%

of mothers initiate
breastfeeding within the
first hour of birth

1/2

children are exclusively
breastfed for the first six
months

HEALTH ADMINISTRATORS!



You can support and promote breastfeeding in your health facility by:

- 1 Having a clearly visible written breastfeeding policy in your facility and communicating the same with all staff.
- 2 Implementing 10 steps of Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative in your facility to create a mother and baby friendly facility culture.
- 3 Ensuring all staff in your facility are oriented and trained on provisions of the IMS Act and their roles and responsibilities.
- 4 Not advertising or promoting infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, or infant foods such as “growing up milks” in your facility.
- 5 Not accepting or distributing samples of infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, or infant foods such as “growing up milks” in your facility.
- 6 Not accepting money or gifts from manufacturers, suppliers, or distributors
- 7 for the purpose of promoting infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, or infant foods.
- 8 Not allowing companies selling or producing food products for children under two years of age to display products or materials in your health facility.
- 9 Not accepting any contribution or benefit from breastmilk substitute producers, suppliers, or distributors that support the funding of a seminar, meeting, conference, educational course, contest, fellowship, research work, or sponsorship.
- 9 Not demonstrating how to use formula for children under two years of age, except to mothers or family members in special cases outlined by the World Health Organization guidelines on “Acceptable Medical Reasons for Use of Breastmilk Substitutes,” and in such cases clearly explain the hazards of infant formula.

Health care providers are not only responsible for compliance to the IMS Act but also for reporting any violation of the IMS Act to the Ministry of Health & Family Welfare and Ministry of Women and Child Development

Citations

1. Begum, K., & Dewey, K., Alive & Thrive Insight, “Impact of early initiation of exclusive breastfeeding on newborn deaths,” 2010.
2. Barros, A., et al., The Lancet, Vol. 379, “Countdown to 2015: a retrospective review of survey data from 54 countries: equity in maternal, newborn, and child health interventions,” 2012.
3. The Lancet Breastfeeding Series, 2016.
4. National Family Health Survey (NFHS-4), 2015-16
5. The Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act, 1992 as Amended in 2003 (IMS Act).
6. UNICEF and World Health Organization (2009). Acceptable medical reasons for use of breast-milk substitutes. Available from: https://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/infantfeeding/WHO_NMHS_NHD_09.01/en/