



IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL REGULATIONS ON THE MARKETING OF BREASTMILK SUBSTITUTES (BMS) AND RELATED PRODUCTS: THE ROLE OF HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

PREAMBLE:

Breastfeeding is one of the most cost-effective and impactful interventions for reducing malnutrition and under-five mortality—both of which are very high in Nigeria. **The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of a child's life, along with continued breastfeeding up to two years of age and beyond.** Research shows that infants under six months who are not breastfed are three to four times more likely to die than those who receive any breast milk.

Improving breastfeeding practices could save approximately 100,000 lives in Nigeria each year and add \$150 million (USD) to Nigeria's economy each year due to increased productivity. Breastfeeding protects children from infectious and chronic diseases, increases cognitive development, and lowers healthcare costs for families and societies. Everyone benefits when mothers breastfeed. Yet despite its unparalleled benefits, mothers and families face significant commercial pressures that undermine breastfeeding.

In 1981, the World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted a resolution for member countries to implement a Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (The Code) in response to concerns from member states about a rise in infant mortality as a result of promotion of infant formula. The Code is aimed at protecting and promoting optimal infant and young child feeding by controlling inappropriate marketing of breast milk substitutes (BMS). The Code covers products such as infant formula, follow-on formula, growing-up milk, and other related products. Nigeria was a signatory to the adoption of the Code in 1981 and has enacted legislation and developed National Regulations in line with the provisions of the Code.

PROVISIONS OF THE CODE/ NATIONAL REGULATIONS

- No advertising of BMS and related products such as feeding bottles, teats, pacifiers, etc. to the public
- No free samples of BMS and related products to pregnant women, new mothers, or families
- No promotion of BMS and related products in healthcare facilities or by health professionals, including the distribution of free or low-cost supplies
- No company sales representatives to advise mothers
- No gifts or personal samples to health workers
- No words or pictures idealising artificial feeding, or pictures of infants on labels of infant milk containers
- Information to health workers should be scientific and factual
- All information on artificial infant feeding, including that on labels, should explain the benefits of breastfeeding and the costs and hazards associated with artificial feeding
- Unsuitable products, such as sweetened condensed milk, should not be promoted for babies
- Manufacturers and distributors should comply with the Code's provisions even if countries have not adopted laws or other measures



BENEFITS OF BREASTFEEDING

To the baby:

- Prevents malnutrition and contains optimal nutrients for growth and development
- Stimulates optimal intellectual development, improved vision, and general health
- Protects against diseases and health issues

To the mother:

- Aids in quick recovery from childbirth and prevents postpartum bleeding
- Helps extend the time between pregnancies
- Fights against iron deficiency, breast and ovarian cancers, osteoporosis, and other diseases

To the community:

- Healthier children make a healthier community
- Fewer materials used in breast milk substitute production means a cleaner environment
- Lower cost to mothers and families, lower national health costs needed long-term
- Increased community and national development



HEALTH WORKERS HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY TO PROTECT BREASTFEEDING

Article 7 in the Code specifies requirements for health workers to encourage and protect breastfeeding, ensure the best information is given to caregivers, and protect against harmful marketing or distribution of products.

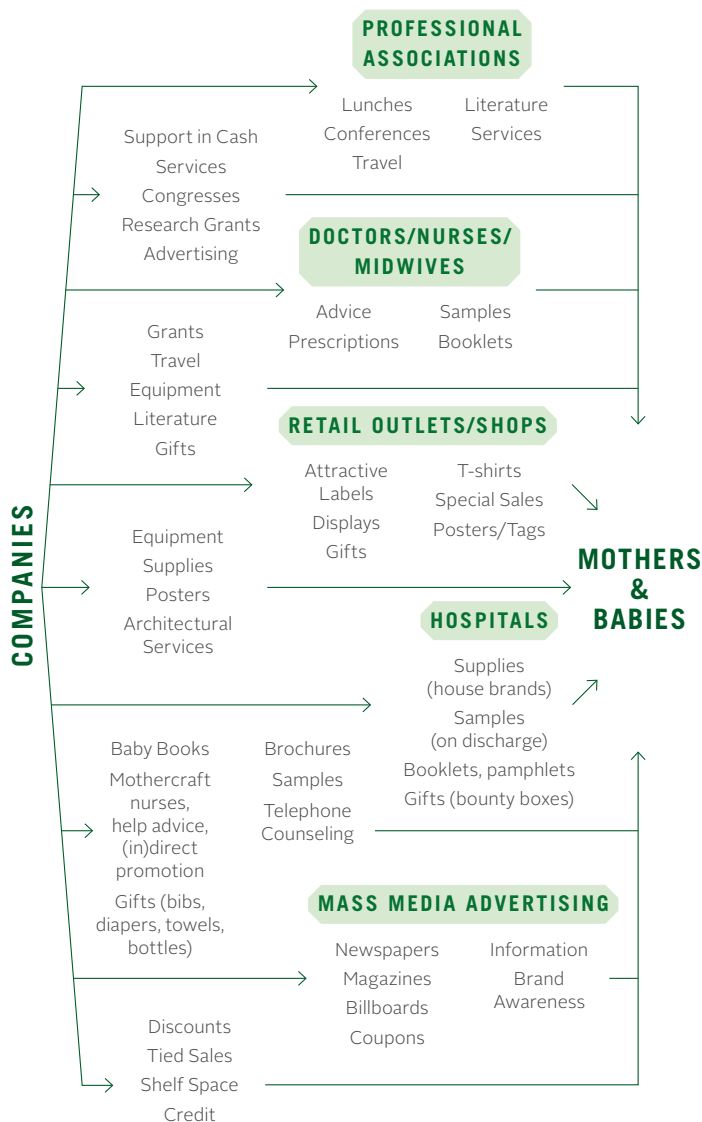
Health workers must:

- Ensure facilities practice “ten steps to successful breastfeeding” (below)
- Provide support and accurate information to families about optimal feeding
- Ensure prohibited products are disposed
- Identify and report inappropriate practices by BMS companies. However, this does not prevent donation of the products during an emergency or the government procuring them for health or humanitarian purposes.

Health workers must not:

- Accept free products, gifts, or incentives from BMS representatives to promote products
- Allow health facilities to be used for commercial events, contests or campaigns
- Allow companies to distribute gifts, coupons, or education materials to parents, caregivers, or families in health facilities

HOW DO BREAST MILK SUBSTITUTE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES GET TO MOTHERS?



TEN STEPS TO SUCCESSFUL BREASTFEEDING

1. Have a written breastfeeding policy that is routinely communicated to all staff
2. Train staff in skills necessary to implement this policy
3. Inform pregnant women about the benefits and management of breastfeeding
4. Help mothers initiate breastfeeding within half an hour of birth
5. Show mothers how to breastfeed and maintain lactation
6. Give infants no food or drink other than breast milk, unless medically indicated
7. Allow mothers and infants to remain together 24 hours a day
8. Encourage breastfeeding on demand
9. Give no artificial teats or pacifiers
10. Foster breastfeeding support groups and refer mothers to them on discharge

REPORT ALL VIOLATIONS TO NAFDAC HQ OR NEAREST OFFICE IN THE STATES:

NAFDAC Corporate Headquarters: Plot 2032 Olusegun Obasanjo Way, Zone 7, Wuse Abuja.

Website: www.nafdac.gov.ng | Email: nafdac@nafdac.gov.ng; info@nafdac.gov.ng

Hotlines: 08037024035, 08023021457, 08053235501

