



IMPLEMENTING THE NATIONAL REGULATIONS ON THE MARKETING OF BREASTMILK SUBSTITUTES (BMS) AND RELATED PRODUCTS: THE ROLE OF MOTHERS & FAMILIES

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.

WHY ARE THE CODE AND NATIONAL REGULATIONS SO IMPORTANT?

The Code and National Regulations:

- Promote optimal Infant and Young Child Feeding (IYCF), improving child survival, growth, and development
- Prevent inappropriate marketing practices of infant food manufacturers and distributors
- Monitor progress on Code implementation annually as required by the World Health Assembly (WHA)
- Track progress and ensure that Code implementation targets are achieved
- Detect and accurately document marketing practices by infant formula manufacturers that violate the Code and Regulations for appropriate redress
- Support an enabling environment for mothers to adopt best IYCF practices

BREASTFEEDING BEST PRACTICES

- Initiate breastfeeding within one hour of birth
- Do not give water or any other drink to the infant at birth
- Breastfeed your baby whenever they are hungry, keeping them close at night so you know when they need to be fed
- Learn best strategies for breastfeeding and maintaining milk flow



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



FAMILIES HAVE A ROLE TO PLAY TO PROTECT BREASTFEEDING

Families and mothers should:

- Prioritize exclusive breastfeeding of your baby for the first six months
- Introduce healthy complementary foods to baby after six months of age up to 24 months along with continued breastfeeding
- Support mothers so they are able to practice exclusive breastfeeding and optimal nutrition for their children
- Learn how to prepare nutritious complementary foods from locally available foods
- Refuse samples, gifts, or guidance from infant food companies
- Discuss the Code, the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding, and the importance of optimal infant and young child nutrition in your community
- Learn to identify and report inappropriate marketing activities of infant food manufacturers and their marketers and report violations to NAFDAC

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

IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

Each provision in the Code and national regulations were created to protect mothers, babies, and families. The public can support the government in its efforts by reporting violations to the nearest NAFDAC office using the relevant monitoring forms.

- 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

BEGIN TO FEED COMPLEMENTARY FOODS AFTER SIX MONTHS

From six to nine months

- **Type of food:** Mashed food
- **How often:** Two to three times each day and one to two healthy snacks
- **How much:** Two to three tablespoons up to one-half (1/2) cup at each meal

From nine to 12 months

- **Type of food:** Finely chopped, mashed, or small food
- **How often:** Three to four times each day and one to two snacks
- **How much:** At least one-half (1/2) cup at each meal

From 12 to 36 months

- **Type of food:** Family foods, chopped or mashed if necessary
- **How often:** Three to four times each day and one to two snacks
- **How much:** Three-quarters (3/4) to one full cup at each meal

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

