WHAT IS THE CODE?
The World Health Assembly (WHA) adopted the International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes (Code) in 1981 to protect infants and young children from inappropriate marketing of breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles, and teats. It was meant to encourage breastfeeding and ensure young children received adequate complementary feeding. Since the Code, the WHA has adopted 19 relevant resolutions. The 2016 WHA resolution welcomed the Guidance on Ending the Inappropriate Promotion of Foods for Infants and Young Children (Guidance). Adherence to the Code and relevant WHA resolutions is key to achieving optimal infant and young child feeding practices around the world.

WHAT PRODUCTS ARE COVERED BY THE CODE?
The Code applies to the marketing of all products that function as breastmilk substitutes, which include any milk marketed for feeding infants and young children up to three years of age (including follow-up formula and growing-up milks), any other product marketed for feeding infants up to 6 months, as well as feeding bottles and teats. The 2016 Guidance also covers all commercially produced foods that are marketed for infants and children six months to three years of age.

A CALL FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION
Health workers, health care facilities, policymakers, and organizations supporting nutrition interventions have an important role to play. The first of the Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding asks that all health facilities comply fully with the Code and relevant World Health Assembly resolutions. This guide provides the highlights of the Code and relevant resolutions that we must work together to uphold.

Exclusive breastfeeding saves lives. Learn more about its importance and access a variety of resources at www.breastmilkonly.com, the website of the Stronger With Breastmilk Only initiative. Unicef, the World Health Organization and Alive & Thrive launched the initiative in 2019.

The Alive & Thrive initiative, managed by FHI Solutions, is currently funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Irish Aid, and other donors. ALIVEANDTHRIVE.ORG
Health workers have a responsibility to encourage and protect breastfeeding and must not accept or distribute samples of breastmilk substitutes.

If infant formula is necessary for a baby, demonstrate proper use and preparation only to mothers or family members who need to use it and clearly explain the hazards of improper use.

Health workers, health systems, professional associations, and nongovernmental organizations must not allow companies that market foods for infants and young children to:

- Use a health care facility to promote breastmilk substitutes, feeding bottles or teats.
- Donate equipment or services.
- Provide free or low-cost donations or samples of breastmilk substitutes.
- Provide other foods for infants or young children other than those distributed through officially sanctioned health programs, and never display company brands.
- Directly or indirectly provide education to parents and other caregivers.
- Use a health facility for commercial events, contests, or campaigns.
- Give gifts or coupons to parents, caregivers and families.
- Provide gifts or incentives to health care staff.

Information and education materials about infant feeding must explain the benefits and superiority of breastfeeding, health hazards associated with bottle-feeding, and costs of using infant formula.