

Marketing in Australia of Infant Formulas: Manufacturers and Importers Agreement

The MAIF Agreement

Preamble

This document sets out the obligations of manufacturers in and importers to, Australia of infant formulas and gives effect in Australia to the principles of the *World Health Organization's International Code of Marketing of Breast Milk Substitutes* (WHO Code).¹

Clause 1: Aim

The aim is to contribute to the provision of safe and adequate nutrition for infants, by the protection and promotion of breastfeeding and by ensuring the proper use of breast milk substitutes, when they are necessary,² on the basis of adequate information and through appropriate marketing and distribution. (WHO Code Article 1)

Clause 2: Scope

This document applies to the marketing in Australia of infant formulas when such products are marketed or otherwise represented to be suitable, with or without modification, for use as a partial or total replacement of breast milk. It also applies to their quality and availability, and to information concerning their use. (WHO Code Article 2)

Clause 3: Definitions

- (a) 'Breast milk substitute' - any food marketed or otherwise represented as a partial or total replacement for breast milk, whether or not suitable for that purpose.
- (b) 'Container' - any form of packaging of infant formulas for sale as a normal retail unit, including wrappers.
- (c) 'Health care system' - governmental, non-governmental or private institutions engaged, directly or indirectly, in health care for mothers, infants and pregnant women and nurseries or child-care institutions. It also includes health workers in private practice. For the purposes of this document, the health care system does not include pharmacies or other retail outlets.
- (d) 'Health care professional' - a professional or other appropriately trained person working in a component of the health care system, including pharmacists and voluntary workers.

¹ Where applicable, clauses in this document are cross-referenced to the relevant articles from the World Health Organization (1981) *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes, Geneva (WHO Code)*.

² For the purposes of the Aim, 'necessary' includes mothers who make an informed choice to use breast milk substitutes.

- (e) 'Infant formula' - any food described or sold as an alternative for human milk for the feeding of infants up to the age of twelve months and formulated in accordance with all relevant clauses of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, including Infant Formula Products Standard 2.9.1.
- (f) 'Label' - any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or attached to, a container of infant formulas.
- (g) 'Marketing' - includes the promotion, distribution, selling, advertising, public relations and information services related to infant formulas.
- (h) 'Marketing personnel' - any persons whose functions include the marketing of infant formulas.
- (i) 'Samples' - single or small quantities of an infant formula provided without cost. (WHO Code Article 3)

Clause 4: Information and Education

- (a) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas in Australia agree that informational and educational materials, whether written, audio or visual, dealing with the feeding of infants and intended to reach pregnant women and parents of infants and young children, should always include clear information on all the following points:
 - (i) the benefits and superiority of breastfeeding;
 - (ii) maternal nutrition, and the preparation for and maintenance of breastfeeding;
 - (iii) the negative effect on breastfeeding of introducing partial bottle-feeding;
 - (iv) the difficulty of reversing the decision not to breastfeed; and
 - (v) where needed, the proper use of infant formula, whether manufactured industrially or home prepared. (WHO Code Article 4.2)
- (b) When such materials contain information about the use of infant formulas, they should include the social and financial implications of its use, the health hazards of inappropriate foods or feeding methods and, in particular, the health hazards of unnecessary or improper use of infant formulas. Such materials should not use any pictures or text which may idealise the use of infant formulas. (WHO Code Article 4.2)
- (c) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should not donate informational or educational equipment or materials unless it is at the request of, and with the written approval of, the appropriate government authority or within guidelines given by the

Commonwealth, State or Territory Governments for this purpose. Such equipment or materials may bear the donating company's name or logo, but should not refer to a proprietary infant formula, and should be distributed only through the health care system. (WHO Code Article 4.3)

Clause 5: The general public and mothers

- (a) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should not advertise or in any other way promote infant formulas to the general public. (WHO Code Article 5.1)
- (b) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should not provide samples of infant formulas to the general public, pregnant women, parents or members of their families. (WHO Code Article 5.2)
- (c) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should not distribute to pregnant women, or parents of infants and young children, any gifts of articles or utensils which may promote the use of breast milk substitutes or bottle-feeding. (WHO Code Article 5.4)
- (d) Marketing personnel, in their business capacity, should not seek direct or indirect contact with pregnant women or with parents of infants and young children. This does not prevent appropriately qualified personnel from responding to complaints or unsolicited requests for information. For these requests, parents should be referred to a health care professional whenever health advice is required. (WHO Code Article 5.5)

Clause 6: Health care system

- (a) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should not use any facility of the health care system for the purpose of promoting infant formulas. This does not, however, preclude the dissemination of information to health care professionals as provided in clause 7(a). (WHO Code Article 6.2)
- (b) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should be aware that facilities of health care systems should not be used for the display of products within the scope of this document, for placards or posters concerning such products, or for the distribution of material provided by a manufacturer or distributor other than that specified in clause 4(c) above. (WHO Code Article 6.3)
- (c) The use by the health care system of pharmacies or retail outlets, 'professional service representatives', 'mothercraft nurses', or similar personnel, provided or paid for by manufacturers or importers of infant formulas is not permitted. (WHO Code Article 6.4)
- (d) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should be aware that feeding with infant formulas, whether manufactured or home prepared, should be demonstrated only by

health care professionals. Such demonstrations should be made only to the parents or other persons who need to use it, and the information given should include a clear explanation of the hazards of improper use. (WHO Code Article 6.5)

- (e) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas may make donations, or low-priced sales, of infant formulas to institutions or organisations, whether for use in the institutions or for distribution outside them. Such provisions should only be used or distributed for infants who have to be fed on breast milk substitutes. If these provisions are distributed for use outside the institutions, this should be done only by the institutions or organisations concerned. Manufacturers or importers should not use such donations or low-price sales as a sales inducement. (WHO Code Article 6.6)
- (f) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should note that, where donated infant formulas are distributed outside an institution, the institution or organisation should take steps to ensure that these provisions can be continued as long as the infants concerned need them. Donors, as well as the institutions or organisations concerned should bear in mind this responsibility. (WHO Code Article 6.7)
- (g) Equipment and materials, in addition to those referred to in clause 4(c), donated to a health care system may bear a company's name or logo, but should not refer to any proprietary infant formulas. (WHO Code Article 6.8)

Clause 7: Health Care Professionals

- (a) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas providing information about the formulas to health care professionals should restrict the information to scientific and factual matters. Such information should not imply or create a belief that bottle-feeding is equivalent or superior to breastfeeding. It should also include the information specified in clause 4(a) above. (WHO Code Article 7.2)
- (b) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should provide members of the medical profession and related health care professionals with information about the products, and this information should accurately reflect current knowledge and responsible opinion. Such material should be clearly identified with the name of the manufacturer or importer, the brand names of the infant formulas, and the date of publication.
- (c) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should not offer any financial or material inducement to health care professionals or members of their families to promote infant formulas, nor should such inducements be accepted by health care professionals or members of their families. (WHO Code Article 7.3)

- (d) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should not provide samples of infant formulas, or of equipment or utensils for their preparation or use, to health care professionals except when necessary for the purpose of professional evaluation or research at the institutional level. (WHO Code Article 7.4)
- (e) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas should disclose to institutions, to which a recipient health care professional is affiliated, any contribution made to him/her, or on his/her behalf, for fellowships, study tours, research grants, attendance at professional conferences, or the like. (WHO Code Article 7.5)

Clause 8: Persons employed by manufacturers and importers

- (a) In systems of sales incentives for marketing personnel, the volume of sales of infant formulas should not be included in the calculation of bonuses, nor should quotas be set specifically for sales of these products. This should not be understood to prevent the payment of bonuses based on the overall sales by a company of other products marketed by it. (WHO Code Article 8.1)
- (b) Personnel employed in marketing infant formulas should not, as part of their job responsibilities, perform educational functions in relation to pregnant women or parents of infants and young children. This does not prevent such personnel from being used for other functions by the health care system. (WHO Code Article 8.2)

Clause 9: Quality and Labelling

- (a) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas must ensure that infant formulas sold in Australia conform to all relevant clauses of the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code, including Infant Formula Products Standard 2.9.1. (WHO Code Articles 9.2, 9.4, 10.1 and 10.2)
- (b) Manufacturers and importers of infant formulas must ensure that labels provide the information required to be provided by the Australia New Zealand Food Standards Code Part 1.2 and Infant Formula Products Standard 2.9.1., and also provide the necessary information about the appropriate use of infant formula and should not discourage breastfeeding. (WHO Code Article 9.1)

Clause 10: Implementation and monitoring

- (a) Independently of any other measures taken to implement their obligations under this document, each manufacturer and importer of infant formulas should regard itself as responsible for monitoring its marketing practices according to the principles and aim of this document, and for taking steps to ensure that its conduct at every level conforms to those principles and aims. (WHO Code Article 11.3)

- (b) Each manufacturer and importer of infant formulas should apprise its personnel of the existence of this document and of their responsibilities under it. (WHO Code Article 11.5)