

## The IMS Act & Complementary Feeding

In India, infant feeding practices are far from optimal and one of the reasons identified has been the commercial influence of baby food manufacturers. Recognising this, the Government of India enacted the *Infant Milk Substitutes, Feeding Bottles and Infant Foods (Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution) Act as amended in 2003 (IMS Act)*, with an objective of protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding by controlling the marketing practices of baby foods manufacturers.

Therefore, the Act intends to promote exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months and continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond.

### The IMS Act Bans All Forms of Promotion of Baby Foods for Babies Under Two Years of Age

- The Act aims to regulate their marketing practices, which lead to unnecessary introduction of complementary foods before the age of 6 months.
- It bans the promotion of any food for consumption of children under the age of two years to practically ensure that breastfeeding is not displaced.



All Forms of Promotion of Baby Foods and Feeding Bottles for Babies Under Two Years of Age

- Advertising
- By Print Media
  - By Electronic Media
  - By any other Method



### The Law controls the marketing and promotion of the following products

**Infant Milk Substitutes**, which include any food being marketed to replace mother's milk upto two years of age. Example : Lactogen-1, Lactogen-2, Nestogen-1, Nestogen-2, Lactodex- 1, Lactodex - 2, Amul Spray, Zerolac, Dexolac, ProSoyal, Simyl-MCT, Similac, Neosure or any other such infant formula.

**Feeding Bottles** of any brand like Bonny Baby, Hello Baby, Wipro or any other brand.

**Infant Foods**, which include any food, marketed for use after the age of six months as a complement to mother's milk. Example : Nestum, Cerelac, Farex, Weano, Veelac, Infacare, First Food, Dexrice, Easum or any other food products promoted for consumption of babies under the age of two years.



Providing Gifts and Free Samples to anyone and Contacting Pregnant or Nursing Women

Use of Educational Material or Advertisement Giving Incomplete or Incorrect Information to Pregnant or Lactating Women



### The 'International Code' and Complementary foods

World Health Assembly resolutions, which have the same status as the International Code, give clear guidance on the promotion of complementary foods and drinks:

- They should not be used or marketed in ways that undermine breastfeeding (WHA 49.15 1996).
- They should not be labelled, advertised or commercially promoted as being suitable for infants under 6 months (WHA 39.28 1986, WHA 54.2 2001).
- The widest possible use of indigenous nutrient-rich food stuffs (WHA 54.2 2001).

## IDEAS FOR ACTION

- Find out how many mothers provide complementary feeding after six months to their children.
- Collect information at the local level on infant feeding practices.
  - Greatest barriers to the optimal feeding practices
  - Information on culture, belief, myths related to breastfeeding
- Find out various available complementary foods locally.
- Find out how many people around you understand complementary feeding and optimal feeding practices.
- Disseminate simple information on home and indigenous made complementary foods.
- Organise Mahila Mandals and make them aware on exclusive breastfeeding, complementary feeding and optimal feeding practices.
- Organise a 'best practices' seminar on breastfeeding, complementary feeding for families and health care providers.
- Advocate with the state government and other policy makers for making comprehensive plan on protection, promotion and support of Infant and Young Child Feeding and link it with State Plan of Action on Children for integrated approach to early childhood care.
- Link with Child Rights movement in your state / district.
- Link with Rotary / Innerwheel club / Lions club in your state / district.
- Link with People's Health Movement and other NGO's working on women and children issues in your state / district.

## RESOURCES

### BPNI Publications

1. Infant and Young Child Feeding Counselling: A Training Course "The 3 in 1 course". An Integrated Course on Breastfeeding, Complementary Feeding and Infant Feeding & HIV Counselling.
2. Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding – "A Guide for the Parents".
3. Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding – Guidelines for Doctors
4. Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding – Guidelines for Nurses
5. Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding – Guidelines for Nutritional Professionals.
6. Information Sheet 1 – Guidelines for Breastfeeding and Complementary Feeding: (All State Specific Indian Languages), a Four page document.
7. Protecting, Promoting and Supporting Breastfeeding – The Indian Experience.
8. Video cassette/CD: Maa ka Pyar- Shishu Ahar, covers early, exclusive breastfeeding and how to breastfeed and complementary feeding.

### Website

9. Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India. Introducing Solids. (Complementary Feeding). <http://www.bpni.org/cgi1/introducing.asp>

### Govt of India Publication

10. National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding, Ministry of HRD, Deptment of Women and Child Development, Food and Nutrition Board, Govt of India, 2004. ([http://wcd.nic.in/national\\_guidelines.html](http://wcd.nic.in/national_guidelines.html))

### What is BPNI

The Breastfeeding Promotion Network of India (BPNI) is a registered, independent, non-profit, national organization that works towards protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding and appropriate complementary feeding of infants & young children. BPNI believes that breastfeeding is the right of all mothers and children. BPNI works through advocacy, social mobilization, information sharing, education, research, training and monitoring the company compliance with the IMS Act.

### BPNI Policy on Funds

BPNI does not accept funds or sponsorship of any kind from the companies producing infant milk substitutes, feeding bottles, related equipments, or infant foods (cereal foods).

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### Your Local Contact :

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## Breastfeeding and Family Foods: Loving and Healthy



Feeding other foods while breastfeeding is continued

Children like to join in eating with the rest of the family.

National Guidelines on Infant and Young Child Feeding advocate that breastfeeding should be started immediately after birth preferably within one hour, exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months, continued breastfeeding for two years or beyond along with appropriate and adequate complementary feeding starting after 6 months.

Breastfeeding is the best way to feed babies for the first 6 months of age and on growing older they need to join-in eating the same foods as the rest of the family. This period of transition from exclusive breastfeeding to family foods is very crucial. Inadequate breastfeeding and delayed or early introduction of complementary foods contributes significantly to the high prevalence of malnutrition in India where 47 percent (about 36 million) of the children under the age of 3 are underweight, which has profound negative consequences on physical development and mental health.

Complementary feeding should be **timely**, meaning that all infants should start receiving foods in addition to breastmilk after 6 months. It

should be **adequate**, meaning that the nutritional value of complementary foods should parallel at least that of breastmilk. Foods should be prepared and given in a **safe** manner so that the risk of contamination with pathogens is minimal and the foods are of **appropriate** texture and given in sufficient quantity.

The adequacy of complementary feeding not only depends on the availability of a variety of foods in the household, but also on the feeding practices of caregivers. Feeding young infants requires active care and stimulation and encouragement for the child to eat.

### THEME

The theme of this year's World Breastfeeding Week (WBW) is continued breastfeeding and giving other foods after six months of age. This transition from exclusive breastfeeding, to breastfeeding and eating with the rest of the family should be in a way that is loving and caring. We should make more people to understand the importance of complementary feeding along with continued breastfeeding and to think of ways to enable mothers to do it.



## World Breastfeeding Week (August 1-7, 2005)