



**Organisations funded  
by the breastmilk  
substitute industry**

April 2022

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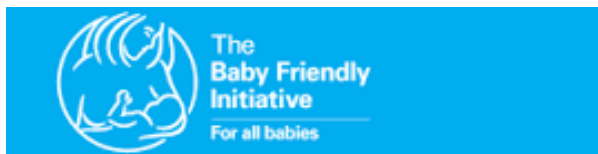
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## Introduction

This short document outlines some of the organisations and relevant websites that provide information to the public and to health professionals on infant feeding, and which are sponsored by breastmilk substitute (BMS) companies. Information provision by BMS companies is part of their commercial PR activity. We believe, however, that there is no need for these companies to provide information about anything other than their own products, and about how these can be safely used. The cost of PR activities inflates the price of infant milks. The WHO *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes* and many subsequent WHA resolutions aim to prevent inappropriate marketing of BMS so that it does not undermine breastfeeding or mislead consumers using BMS. It is important to note that restricting marketing does not mean that a range of appropriate products cannot be sold, or that factual and scientific information about them cannot be made available. It simply aims to enable choices to be made based on full, impartial information, rather than misleading, inaccurate or biased marketing claims.

UK regulations on the marketing of infant formula and follow-on formula are weak, and there are no similar regulations for other products like bottles, teats and toddler milks. This means that companies are able to promote their products on websites, through helplines and parent clubs, and to health professionals in magazines, at conferences, in professional journals and through links with professional bodies. There are frequent examples of how the marketing rules defined by the Code are stretched and broken, which can be found at [www.babymilkaction.org](http://www.babymilkaction.org)

The Unicef Baby Friendly Initiative UK produces a very useful report:



### **A guide for health workers to working within the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes**

This is regularly updated and can be found at:

<https://www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2016/10/Working-within-The-Code-Guide-for-Health-Workers.pdf>

As UNICEF point out in this report:

*“The companies often present themselves as philanthropic partners in the fight to protect and improve infant health and health workers may feel reassured by this. In reality, the companies, like all other commercial companies, exist to increase shareholder value by maintaining and increasing profit. For companies manufacturing formula milks or other food for babies this means seeking to sell as much of their product as possible. To do this, they need to persuade parents to formula feed rather than breastfeed and/or to choose their formula milk rather than a competitor’s, and/or to use their brand of baby food as early and as much as possible.”*

We strongly recommend that all health workers download a copy of this report and consider their important role in giving information and advice to families, and how they can work within recognised codes of conduct to ensure that they are not unwittingly acting as conduits for BMS

company marketing messages. For more information about how companies promote their products to healthcare professionals using misleading information see the resources '*Scientific and Factual? A review of breastmilk substitute advertising to healthcare professionals*' and '*Scientific and Factual? A further review of breastmilk substitute advertising to healthcare professionals*' available at [www.firststepsnutrition.org](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org)

Commercial companies are not experts in pregnancy, birth or infant and young child feeding, and health workers should be encouraged only to use expert evidence-based information from trusted sources. A list of such sources is provided on the next page.

If health workers do want to find out information about a particular product, they can:

1. Visit [www.infantmilkinfo.org](http://www.infantmilkinfo.org) to find independent information on the composition of infant milks and whether the claims made about them are evidence based.
2. Look on company websites and ask direct questions of company staff, if additional details on the composition and safe use of a particular product are required that cannot be found elsewhere.

There is no need for health workers to be *given* information by companies or their representatives, or to attend events that are company-sponsored to gain new information. It is important that health workers do not passively receive information that companies wish to give them, and instead are active in seeking the particular information that they may need and are critical of any evidence presented.

Health workers may be surprised to know that:

- If information provided by companies to health workers on their websites, in literature and at study days is not in line with current UK policy and/ or is not scientifically accurate, there is no way of challenging this.
- Claims on infant milks are often made for ingredients that are added optionally – that means that they are not seen as necessary for the health and development of infants by those who regulate infant milk composition. These are added primarily to gain market advantage and to suggest that artificial milks can be made to mimic breastmilk, which is not possible.
- Some infant milks which are sold over the counter are marketed under the regulations for Foods for Special Medical Purposes, and by definition these products should only be used under medical supervision. These are comfort milks, anti-reflux milks and some but not all lactose-free milks. These products are advertised heavily in the health professional literature.

We believe that company-sponsored websites should *not* be used as a source of health-related information by health workers, or families, as these are not independent sources of information.

# Who provides independent information on food and nutrition for infants and young children?

Independent information about breastfeeding, infant formula and infant and child nutrition is available from the following organisations and websites:

- Association of Breastfeeding Mothers – [www.abm.me.uk](http://www.abm.me.uk)
- Best Beginnings – [www.bestbeginnings.org.uk](http://www.bestbeginnings.org.uk)
- Better Health Start4life - [www.nhs.uk/start4life](http://www.nhs.uk/start4life)
- Bliss - [www.bliss.org.uk](http://www.bliss.org.uk)
- Breastfeeding Network – [www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk](http://www.breastfeedingnetwork.org.uk)
- First Steps Nutrition Trust – [www.firststepsnutrition.org](http://www.firststepsnutrition.org)
- Healthy Start – [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)
- HENRY – [www.henry.org.uk](http://www.henry.org.uk)
- Institute of Health Visiting – [www.ihv.org.uk](http://www.ihv.org.uk)
- Lactation Consultants GB – [www.lcgb.org](http://www.lcgb.org)
- La Leche League – [www.laleche.org.uk](http://www.laleche.org.uk)
- Midwives Information and Resource Service – [www.midirs.org](http://www.midirs.org)
- NCT – [www.nct.org.uk](http://www.nct.org.uk)
- NHS – [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk)
- NHS Health Scotland – [www.healthscotland.com](http://www.healthscotland.com)
- Parent Club – [www.parentclub.scot](http://www.parentclub.scot) (previously FeedGood)
- Public Health Agency for Northern Ireland - [www.publichealth.hscni.net](http://www.publichealth.hscni.net)
- Public Health Wales – [www.publichealthwales.org](http://www.publichealthwales.org)
- Royal College of Midwives - [www.rcm.org.uk](http://www.rcm.org.uk)
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health – [www.rcpch.ac.uk](http://www.rcpch.ac.uk)
- Scottish Maternal and Early Years – <https://www.publichealthscotland.scot/>
- Unicef UK Baby Friendly Initiative – [www.babyfriendly.org.uk](http://www.babyfriendly.org.uk)

In England, Voluntary Food and Drink Guidelines for Early Years Settings in England can be found at <https://www.foundationyears.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Eat-Better-Start-Better1.pdf>

In Scotland, Setting the Table: Nutritional guidance and food standards for early years childcare providers in Scotland is available at <http://www.healthscotland.com/uploads/documents/30341-Setting%20the%20Table.pdf>

In Wales, Food and Nutrition for Childcare Settings can be found at: <https://gov.wales/food-and-nutrition-childcare-settings-full-guidance>

Northern Ireland, Nutrition Matters in the Early Years guidance can be found at: <https://www.publichealth.hscni.net/publications/nutrition-matters-early-years-guidance-feeding-under-fives-childcare-setting>

# What is a breastmilk substitute and who markets them?

Breastmilk substitutes (BMS) covered by the WHO International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes are:

- Infant formula, follow on formula and specialised infant milks
- Growing up and toddler milks
- Any milks (or products that could be used to replace milk) marketed for feeding infants and young children up to the age of 3 years
- Other foods and beverages promoted as suitable for feeding a baby during the first 6 months of life when exclusive breastfeeding is recommended

As well as:

- Feeding bottles and teats

These products are marketed by a wide range of manufacturers, but are also advertised by distributors, by retailers and by others, and via apps and websites. It is difficult to keep up with all those that may market BMS, so it is useful to check links regularly. Globally, the International Baby Food Action network (IBFAN) and the International Code Documentation Centre (ICDC) monitor Code violations. More information about their work can be found at <https://www.ibfan.org/international-code/>.

Baby Milk Action has monitored Code violations in the UK for many years and you can see their most recent work 'Look What they're Doing in the UK' here <http://www.babymilkaction.org/monitoringuk17>. They report on Code violations by the following formula companies: Danone (Aptamil and Cow and Gate brands), Kendal Nutricare (Kendamil brand), Alid (Mamia brand); and by the following companies marketing bottles and teats: Chicco, Medela, Minbie and NUK; as well as by the retailers Aldi, Boots, Morrisons and Mothercare. *However, this does not mean that these are the only Code violators, they are just a selection.* Their latest international report 'Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2017' also reports violations in the UK by Lansinoh, MAM and Tommee Tippee.

## How do I know if a company, retailer or provider of services is not WHO Code compliant?

It is difficult to keep a definitive list of all those who market or advertise BMS inappropriately. Most BMS manufacturers, many of those who market bottles and teats, most retailers who sell foods for infants and young children and many magazines or parenting sites that take advertising are *not* Code compliant. If you have a specific question about a company, product or service and are working in a Unicef UK Baby Friendly accredited area then you could ask the local infant feeding lead. Infant feeding leads who have questions can email [vicky@firststepsnutrition.org](mailto:vicky@firststepsnutrition.org).

## Organisations and websites that are funded by, or work in partnership with, breastmilk substitute companies

The organisations shown below all work with breastmilk substitute companies in some way. This list is not exhaustive and we welcome any additions or corrections.

| Organisation   | Website/ twitter handle  | Company they work with/are funded by  |
|--|--|---|
| <b>Abbott Nutrition Health Institute</b>   | <a href="https://anhi.org/">https://anhi.org/</a>  | Abbott Nutrition  |
| <b>Allergy UK</b>  | <a href="http://www.allergyuk.org">www.allergyuk.org</a><br>@AllergyUK1  | In 2022 corporate partners included Abbott and Danone Nutricia  |
| <b>Aptaclub</b>  | <a href="http://www.aptaclub.co.uk">www.aptaclub.co.uk</a><br>@aptaclubuk  | Danone Nutricia   |
| <b>Cow &amp; Gate baby club</b>  | <a href="http://www.cgbabyclub.co.uk">www.cgbabyclub.co.uk</a><br>@cowandgate  | Danone Nutricia   |
| <b>British Dietetic Association</b>  | <a href="https://www.bda.uk.com/@BDA_Dieticians">https://www.bda.uk.com/@BDA_Dieticians</a>                                  | Strategic partners include: Danone, Nutricia, Abbott Nutrition and Mead Johnson. Key supporters include: Vitaflo (Nestlé)   |
| <b>British Nutrition Foundation</b>  | <a href="https://www.nutrition.org.uk/@foodafactoflife">https://www.nutrition.org.uk/@foodafactoflife</a><br>@nutrition4baby | Corporate members include Danone and Nestlé Nutrition   |
| <b>British Specialist Nutrition Association</b>  | <a href="http://www.bsna.co.uk">www.bsna.co.uk</a><br>@BSNA_UK   | Represents: Abbott Nutrition, Danone Nutricia, Ella's Kitchen, Hipp Organic, Mead Johnson, Nestlé Health Science, Nestlé Nutrition, Nutricia Advanced Medical Nutrition and Vitaflo |
| <b>Early Life Nutrition</b> (this absorbed the previous 'Aptamil Professional' and 'In Practice' websites) | <a href="https://eln.nutricia.co.uk/">https://eln.nutricia.co.uk/</a><br>@ELN_UK   | Funded by Danone Nutricia   |
| <b>Early Years Alliance</b> (previously the pre-school learning alliance)                                  | <a href="http://www.eyalliance.org.uk">www.eyalliance.org.uk</a><br>@EYAlliance  | Partners with the Early Years Nutrition Partnership (see below)   |
| <b>Early Years Nutrition Partnership</b>   | <a href="http://www.eynpartnership.org">www.eynpartnership.org</a><br>@EYNpartnership  | Funded by Danone Early Life Nutrition. A partnership involving the British Nutrition Foundation and the Early Years Alliance.   |
| <b>Eat like a Champ</b>  | <a href="http://www.eatlikeachamp.co.uk">www.eatlikeachamp.co.uk</a><br>@EatLikeAChampUK                                     | Sponsored by Danone, a collaboration with the British Nutrition Foundation and British Dietetic Association   |
| <b>Gut Feelings multi-disciplinary expert panel</b>  | <a href="https://www.mimslearning.co.uk/pages/gut-feelings">https://www.mimslearning.co.uk/pages/gut-feelings</a>            | Funded by Danone Nutricia   |

| Organisation                                    | Website/ twitter handle   | Company they work with/are funded by                           |
|---|---|--|
| <b>Health Professional Academy</b>              | <a href="https://www.healthprofessionalacademy.co.uk/">https://www.healthprofessionalacademy.co.uk/</a><br>@HealthProfAcad          | Each course sponsored individually, sponsors include Lansinoh. |
| <b>HiPP Baby Club</b>                           | <a href="https://www.hipp.co.uk/@HiPPOrganic">https://www.hipp.co.uk/@HiPPOrganic</a>   | Hipp   |
| <b>Hipp Organic Healthcare Professional Hub</b> | <a href="https://hcp.hipp.com/">https://hcp.hipp.com/</a>   | Hipp   |
| <b>Infant &amp; Toddler Forum</b>               | <a href="http://www.infantandtoddlerforum.org">www.infantandtoddlerforum.org</a><br>@InfTodForum                                    | Funded by Danone Nutricia                                      |
| <b>Kendamil</b>                                 | <a href="http://www.kendamil.co.uk">www.kendamil.co.uk</a><br>@KendamilUK   | Kendal Nutricare   |
| <b>N+ Education Hub</b>                         | <a href="https://www.nplushub.co.uk/">https://www.nplushub.co.uk/</a>   | Funded by Nestlé   |
| <b>NANNYcare</b>                                | <a href="http://www.nannycare.co.uk">www.nannycare.co.uk</a><br>@NannycareUK  | NANNYcare  |
| <b>NNedPro</b>                                  | <a href="https://www.nnedpro.org.uk/">https://www.nnedpro.org.uk/</a><br>@NNedPro   | Sponsors include/have included Mead Johnson and Abbott         |
| <b>Piccolo Family Club</b>                      | <a href="https://www.mylittlepiccolo.com/join-the-family/">https://www.mylittlepiccolo.com/join-the-family/</a><br>@MyLittlePiccolo | Piccolo  |
| <b>Phunky Foods</b>                             | <a href="http://www.phunkyfoods.co.uk">www.phunkyfoods.co.uk</a><br>@PhunkyFoods  | Funded by Nestlé   |
| <b>SMA Nutrition</b>                            | <a href="https://www.smababy.co.uk/registration/">https://www.smababy.co.uk/registration/</a>                                       | Nestlé   |
| <b>SMA Professional</b>                         | <a href="http://www.smahcp.co.uk">www.smahcp.co.uk</a>  | Nestlé   |
| <b>Toddlebox (Ireland)</b>                      | <a href="http://www.toddlebox.ie">www.toddlebox.ie</a><br>@toddleboxirl   | Funded by Danone Nutricia                                      |



## Food Companies marketing baby food for infants 4+ months or 4-6 months

| Name of brand/company   | Examples from website  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Aldi Mamia              | <a href="#">Mamia Organic Mangoes 70g   ALDI</a>   |
| Aptamil                 | <a href="#">Aptamil® Creamed Banana Porridge - 125g Pack   Aptashop</a>  |
| Cow & Gate              | <a href="#">Breakfasts, lunches, dinners and desserts for babies 4-6 months - Cow &amp; Gate (cgbabyclub.co.uk)</a>      |
| Ella's Kitchen          | <a href="#">4 Month Baby Food + Pouches   Ella's Kitchen (ellaskitchen.co.uk)</a>  |
| Hipp Organic            | <a href="#">HiPP Organic 1st Tastes Jar Bundle 4mth+ (6 x 125g)   HiPP Organic Shop</a>                                  |
| Kendamil                | <a href="#">Organic Gluten Free Porridge   Baby Cereal   Baby Porridge   Kendamil</a>                                    |
| Milupa                  | <a href="#">Stage One (4 Months+) - Milupa Ireland</a>   |
| Piccolo                 | <a href="#">Piccolo Organic First Tastes: Veggie Box - Piccolo (mylittlepiccolo.com)</a>                                 |
| Sainsbury's Little Ones | <a href="#">Sainsbury's Little Ones Organic Simply Prune Smooth Puree 4+ Months 70g   Sainsbury's (sainsburys.co.uk)</a> |

If anyone has any information that they think can be usefully added to this resource then please send to [vicky@firststepsnutrition.org](mailto:vicky@firststepsnutrition.org)