

Infant Nutrition Industry Code of Practice

SUMMARY

The manufacturers of formula milks in the UK have launched a new Code of Practice

The Infant Nutrition Industry (INI) Code is a voluntary self-regulation standard developed by the British Specialist Nutrition Association, the trade association representing infant food manufacturers in the UK. It demonstrates industry's commitment to responsible business practice including its commitment to the World Health Organisation's International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes,¹ as implemented within the UK's specific legal and economic context. The Code covers areas of industry practice in the UK including product quality, composition, safety, sales, marketing and clinical research.

The Code will be regulated by a new, independent Code of Practice Authority (INICPA) which will investigate any complaints made and have the power to require any company found to be in breach of the Code to take appropriate steps to correct it.

The Code applies to the following product types used for infants aged 0–12 months:

- **infant formula** suitable from birth (also known as 'first infant milk')
- **follow-on formula** suitable from 6–12 months, designed for use as part of a mixed weaning diet
- **infant foods for special medical purposes** (iFSMP), specialist formulas which are designed for infants from 0–12 months and should be used under medical supervision

Formula foods are amongst the most strictly regulated of all foodstuffs.² Extensive UK and European law exists in relation to the promotion, composition, labelling, sale and safety of formula foods. The INI Code reflects this legislation and extends beyond it in several areas.

Complaints Procedure

The INI Code will be administered by INICPA which consists of an independent Director and Panel, and is supported by a secretariat.

Signatory Companies, healthcare professionals, healthcare professional organisations, members of Parliament, devolved Parliaments and Assemblies are eligible to lodge a complaint if they believe that the INI Code has been breached.

The complaints procedure is an online process. The Director will investigate potential breaches of the Code and may convene the Panel if necessary. If the complaint is upheld, the company in breach of the Code will be required to take corrective action. The outcome of complaints will be published by BSNA at www.bsna.co.uk.

The complaints procedure will go live on 1 February 2019.

Signatories

Abbott Laboratories Ltd
Danone Early Life Nutrition
HiPP UK Ltd

Mead Johnson Nutrition
– part of RB Group
Nestlé Health Science

Nestlé Nutrition
Nutricia Advanced Medical Nutrition

¹ http://www.who.int/nutrition/publications/code_english.pdf

² Regulation EU No. 2016/127 and EU Directive 2006/141/EC. See also Regulation EU No. 2016/128 and Directive 1999/21/EC (in relation to iFSMPs); Regulation (EU) No. 609/2013 on food intended for infants and young children, food for special medical purposes, and total diet replacement for weight control; The Food for Specific Groups (Information and Compositional Requirements) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2017 No. 62; The Medical Food (England) Regulations 2000 No. 845; The Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula (England) Regulations 2007 No. 3521

Supporting Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is the best way to feed a healthy infant and is important for both mother and baby's health and wellbeing. The World Health Organisation recommends that infants are exclusively breastfed until six months of age, after which breastfeeding is complemented with the appropriate introduction of solid food until two years of age and beyond.

There is no question that breastmilk provides the best possible nutrition for infants. Signatories to the INI Code fully support initiatives to increase the rates of breastfeeding in the UK.

However, when healthy infants are not exclusively breastfed, the only food recognised by the WHO as a suitable and safe alternative to breastmilk is a scientifically developed infant formula.

There may also be circumstances in which infants who have a particular disease, disorder or medical condition require an iFSMP, either as a sole source of nutrition or as a supplementary feed.

Infant nutrition companies, health practitioners and government all have an important role to play in ensuring that the mothers and carers of infants who are fed formula receive adequate and appropriate information, whilst also protecting and promoting breastfeeding.

Principles underpinning the INI Code

Principle 1

Superiority of Breastmilk – *We acknowledge and support the superiority of breastmilk and breastfeeding.*

We support breastfeeding as the first and best choice to feed a baby, and recognise the superiority of breastmilk as the optimal food for healthy infants.

Principle 2

Compliance – *We comply with all relevant legislation.*

We comply with all relevant EU and UK laws and regulations.

Principle 3

Accountability – *We are responsible for our actions and legally accountable to relevant authorities.*

We have in place internal governance procedures to ensure compliance with the INI Code, and commit to taking corrective action in respect of any breaches.

Principle 4

Informed choice – *We support the right of parents and carers to make the appropriate choices for the infants in their care.*

Healthcare professionals, parents and other carers should have all the information they need to enable them to make informed choices about their infants' nutrition.

Principle 5

Quality – *We adhere to rigorous quality standards.*

Quality is a top priority. Our ingredients are sourced, and our products manufactured, to rigorous compositional and safety specifications, meeting strict hygienic and quality control standards, as set out in relevant EU and UK legislation.