



dangers of bottle feeding: 4,000 babies die every day



concentrated instead of ready-to-feed. Without being able to read the instructions, she simply fed it to the baby. Within a few days, she had to take the baby back to hospital. It was barely clinging to life.

Stories like these are repeated thousands of times every day, all over the world. While richer families can rush sick babies to hospital, poor and rural families often have no access to health care and suffer tragic results.

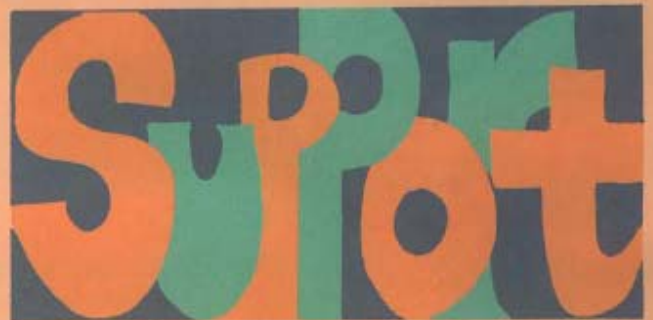
Special responsibility of health workers

Health workers have a special responsibility for the success or failure of the Code. They are frequently the target for promotional practices, and **health care facilities** are used by companies as the perfect channel for encouraging the use of their products. Contrary to general public advertising, focusing on health workers gives companies access to a specialised profession with direct and authoritative influence over mothers.

Two articles of the International Code deal specifically with the use of health care systems and the role of health workers. Health workers do not have to wait for the Code to become a law in their own country. They can act now. They can make their health care facility more baby-friendly by removing any promotion for infant feeding products.

History of the International Code

- 1939** Dr. Cecily Williams speaks on *Milk and Murder* in Singapore. She states that deaths resulting from "misguided propaganda on infant feeding should be regarded as murder."
- 1968** Dr Derrick Jelliffe, in Jamaica, coins the term 'commerciogenic malnutrition' to describe the impact of industry marketing practices on infant health.
- 1973** New Internationalist magazine in UK has cover story on *The Baby Food Tragedy* and calls for a campaign to halt promotion.
- 1976** Swiss court warns Nestlé to change its marketing practices. This was the result of a lawsuit by Nestlé against campaigners who accused the company of killing babies. The Nestlé Boycott starts in 1977.



- 1978** Bristol Myers, an American baby food company, settles a lawsuit by agreeing to halt all direct consumer advertising. As the Nestlé Boycott expands, Edward Kennedy holds Senate Hearings on baby milk marketing.
- 1979** WHO and UNICEF host an international meeting on infant and young child feeding, calling for development of an international code of marketing.
- 1981** International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes adopted at World Health Assembly by 118 votes to 1, with only USA voting against.
- 1984** World Health Assembly adopts a resolution cautioning against cereals and other infant foods promoted for use at too early an age.
- 1986** Free and subsidised supplies of breastmilk substitutes to hospitals are banned by a unanimous WHO resolution.
- 1988** Companies continue to give free supplies and, in protest, more consumer boycotts begin in many countries.
- 1990** The Innocenti Declaration calls upon all countries to adopt the Code in its entirety by 1995.
- 1992** The Baby-Friendly Hospital Initiative expands to a worldwide movement. One of the 10 baby-friendly steps emphasises the ban on free supplies.
- 1994** Free supplies to end in all countries.