

CODE COMPLIANCE, ALSO IN EMERGENCIES

To minimise the risks of artificial feeding and avoid commercial exploitation of crises, it is vital to implement the [International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes](#) and relevant WHA Resolutions.

Recommended procedures:

- Donations of breastmilk substitutes, bottles, teats and commercial baby foods should be refused.
- If needed, breastmilk substitutes should be purchased by the organisations responsible for the nutrition programmes, based on a careful analysis and assessment of the situation at hand, and only after approval and together with the appointed emergency health/nutrition coordinating body and the most senior health/nutrition advisor at headquarter level.
- Purchased breastmilk substitutes should preferably be generically labelled (contact the local UNICEF office about obtaining of generically labelled formula).
- If breastmilk substitutes are distributed, their distribution and use should be carefully monitored and infant health followed up by trained health staff. Distribution should only be to infants with a clearly identified need, and for as long as the infants need them (until maximum 1 year age or until breastfeeding is re-established).
- Breastmilk substitutes should NEVER be part of a general distribution.
- Products should be labelled in accordance with the Code using correct language, instructions and messages, should comply with the standards Codex Alimentarius, and have a shelf life of at least one year from the date of distribution.
- Bottles and teats should NEVER be distributed, and their use should be discouraged. CUP FEEDING should be encouraged instead.

The World Health Assembly decided:

Emergencies: [Resolution 1994](#): *"In emergency relief operations, breastfeeding for infants should be protected, promoted and supported. Any donated supplies of breastmilk substitutes, or other products covered by the scope of the Code, may be given only under strict conditions:*

- *if the infant has to be fed with breastmilk substitutes,*
- *the supply is continued for as long as the infant concerned needs it,*
- *and the supply is not used as a sales inducement."*