

# breastfeeding

## by the numbers

### 6 months

duration of exclusive breastfeeding\* recommended by WHO and UNICEF for optimal infant growth, development and health

### 24 days

average duration of exclusive breastfeeding in the Philippines (2003 National Demographic and Health Survey)

### 1.4%

percentage of babies 6-7 months old who are still exclusively breastfed (2003 NDHS)



### 16,000

number of child deaths per year that can be traced to formula-feeding (WHO)

### 25

number of times a formula-fed infant is more likely to die of diarrhea, than a breastfed infant (UNICEF)

### P55.7 million

amount spent yearly for out-patient treatment of acute respiratory infections due to formula-feeding (WHO)



### 12%

percentage of infants below one year old who are underweight (2003 National Nutrition Survey)

### 32%

percentage of one-year-olds who are underweight (2003 NNS)



### ₱ 4,000

average monthly cost of formula-feeding one infant (UNICEF)

### ₱ 0

cost of mother's breastmilk



### 22

number of infant formula products that were recalled between 1982 and 1994 (US Food and Drug Administration)

### 7

number of infant formula recalls classified as potentially life threatening (US FDA)



### 98%

amount of protection from pregnancy that a breastfeeding mother has if: she does not give the baby any other food or drinks or a pacifier; she breastfeeds on demand day and night; her menstrual periods have not resumed; and, the baby is less than six months old (UNICEF)



\*exclusive breastfeeding - breastmilk alone is the **only** food and drink given to the infant; not even water is given

# *the costs* of formula-feeding

Human breastmilk is free food that is nutritionally superior to any other. And yet, families in the Philippines pay for breastmilk substitutes, at great cost to them and the Philippine economy.

- Formula-feeding costs an average of P4,000 a month per infant. To save on costs, some families over-dilute the formula or use other kinds of milk – including condensed milk – leading to malnutrition, illnesses and death.
- WHO estimates that Filipinos spend P43 billion a year to formula-feed their infants.
- Formula-feeding requires clean water and fuel for sterilization.
- Families that use infant formula have to spend more for doctor's consultations, medicines and hospitalization. WHO estimates that the cost of out-patient treatment for acute respiratory infections caused by formula feeding totals P55.7 million per year, while hospitalization costs total P26 million per year.
- Their parents have to miss more working days, resulting in loss of income and productivity. WHO estimates that the total lost wages due to tending formula-fed children for diarrhea and acute respiratory infections during the first six months of life is P1 billion.
- Funeral costs associated with the 16,000 child deaths due to formula-feeding and other inappropriate infant feeding habits totals P536 million a year.
- Formula-feeding produces huge amounts of waste – cans, cartons, old feeding bottles and rubber nipples – that burden our environment
- Because of limited milk production in the Philippines, the country relies on milk imports to provide breastmilk substitutes. According to NEDA, the country spent P20.5 billion (US\$381 million) on milk imports in January to November 2004

*formula feeding is expensive  
for families and the economy*

# *the risks* of formula-feeding

- In the first two months of life, an infant who receives infant formula is up to 25 times more likely to die from diarrhea and four times more likely to die from pneumonia than an exclusively breastfed baby. WHO estimates that 20 per cent of infant deaths in the Philippines can be traced to formula-feeding.
- Babies who are formula-fed are also more prone to: asthma; allergies; childhood cancers; Type 1 diabetes (during childhood and later in life); cardiovascular disease; obesity; gastrointestinal infections; ear infections; and, exposure to environmental contaminants (whereas breastmilk counteracts the adverse effects of pollutants).
- Infant formula is nutritionally deficient compared to human breastmilk. Some infant formula brands have been withdrawn from the market due to either deficient or excessive amounts of certain nutrients, with life-threatening results. In contrast, breastmilk contains all the nutrition an infant needs in the necessary amounts and in forms readily absorbed by the body. The composition of breastmilk even changes to adapt to the changing needs of the growing infant.
- Infant formula does not contain the antibodies and immune factors that are present in human breastmilk. These components in human breastmilk protect babies from diseases, infections and even environmental pollutants.
- Formula-feeding can cause poor growth, illness and death when too little or too much water is added, or the water, bottles or rubber nipples are not clean. Infant formula goes bad if left at room temperature for a few hours.
- Infant formula is not a sterile product. According to the International Food Safety Authorities Network, “present technology does not seem to allow for the production of commercially sterile powders.” The presence of *enterobacter sakazakii* in powdered milk formula is an emerging public health concern. Infant formula products have been recalled from the market for containing bacteria, microorganisms, and glass particles.
- Formula-feeding retards children’s cognitive ability and educational achievement. In many studies, formula-fed babies:
  - Consistently scored lower in IQ and other standardized tests than breastfed babies. The cognitive differences increase with longer breastfeeding and persist until late childhood
  - Had lower reading comprehension, mathematical ability and overall scholastic ability than children who were breastfed as babies

*breastmilk substitutes are dangerous  
and deadly to children*

# *the law* on breastmilk substitutes

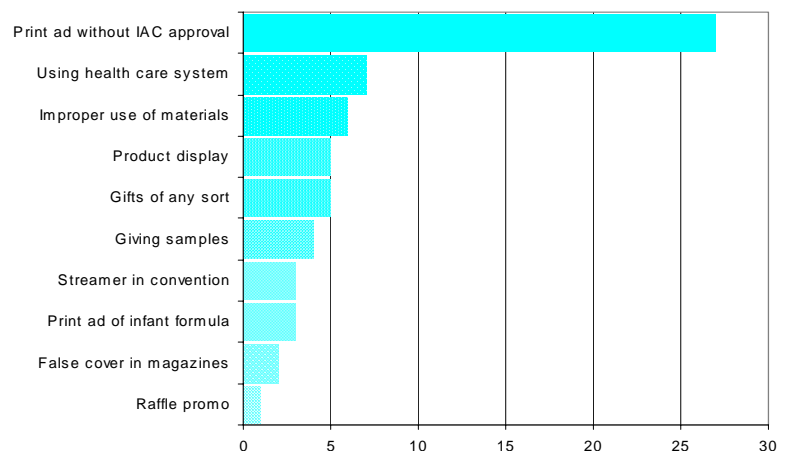
Executive Order 51, the “National Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, Breastmilk Supplement and Other Related Products,” was promulgated in 1986. Some of its provisions are:

- defines “breastmilk substitute” as any food being marketed or otherwise represented as a partial or total replacement for breastmilk, whether or not suitable for that purpose
- prohibits the use of any picture or text in informational and educational materials, which may idealize the use of breastmilk substitutes
- prohibits manufacturers and distributors from giving, directly or indirectly, samples and supplies of breastmilk substitutes or gifts of any sort to the public, hospitals and health institutions, and personnel of the health care system
- prohibits point-of-sale advertising, giving of samples or any other promotion devices to induce sales directly to consumers at retail level
- prohibits the use of the health care system to promote breastmilk substitutes
- mandates health workers to encourage and promote breastfeeding

Based on the records of the Bureau of Food and Drugs (BFAD), milk companies violate EO 51:

- From July 2001 to December 2004, a total of 63 violations have been recorded
- Of these, the most common violation was the distribution of print ads without approval by the Inter-agency Committee (43 per cent of violations)
- The number of violations increased from 11 in 2003 to 19 in 2004
- The highest number of violations recorded was in 2002, with 22 violations

Number and types of violations of EO 51, 2001-2004



*EO51 aims to protect  
and promote breastfeeding in the Philippines*

# breaking the rules

A 31-country survey in 1997 showed that the main producers of infant formula and other breastmilk substitutes did not comply with the requirements in the International Code of Marketing Breastmilk Substitutes and resolutions of the World Health Assembly.

Some of the violations observed in the Philippines were:

- Companies gave samples or supplies to mothers, health workers or health care facilities
- Companies used gifts to health workers as inducements to promote products or as a way to advertise. For example, a company provided note pads to doctors that show the symbols associated with their infant formula products.
- Gifts for personal use were given as inducements to promote products. One company offered doctors one year's membership to Club Med as well as a Club Med Privilege card for credit and discounts. At least one company's medical representatives had entertainment budgets to give parties such as for a doctor's birthday.
- Officers of the Integrated Midwives Association in each provincial chapter were offered all sorts of assistance, including gifts, scholarships, travel and study grants.
- Some companies promoted infant formula by giving gifts in return for scoops or box tops. After collecting 60 scoops from tins of an infant formula, a mother would get a water pitcher, or an umbrella in exchange for 100 box tops of another formula.
- A booklet distributed by a company stated: "There is no need to be anxious about bottle feeding since modern science has made infant formulas as similar to human milk as possible."
- One company distributed booklets for new mothers with a full page that extolled the virtues of formula, stating that the company's infant formula products "are designed to fulfil the nutritional needs of infants by providing all essential nutrients in their proper amounts in quantities closest to that of human milk."
- A brochure stated, "From four months onwards, milk alone can no longer provide for the nutritional needs of a much more active baby."

Source: *Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 1998*, based on the results of the second IBFAN Monitoring Project. The Report was compiled and edited by Ellen Sokol, Shanti Thiagarajah and Annelies Allain, of the International Code Documentation Centre (ICDC).

*producers of breastmilk substitutes do not comply*

# resource persons

**Dr Nicholas Alipui**

Country Representative  
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
Telephone 901 0124

**Dr Romanus Mkerenga**

Chief, Health and Nutrition Section  
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
Telephone 901 0150

**Dale Rutstein**

Chief, Communication Section  
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)  
Telephone 901 0177  
Mobile 0917 866 4969

**Dr Jean Marc Olive**

Representative in the Philippines  
World Health Organization  
Telephone 338 8605

**Larry Henares**

Presidential Adviser on National Affairs  
Telephone 844 2390  
Telefax 810 3372

**Ma Ines Av Fernandez**

Executive Director  
Arugaan  
Telephone 426 3918  
Mobile 0919 233 0200

**Dr Elvira Henares-Esguerra, RPh, MD, FPDS**

International Board Certified Lactation  
Consultant  
Founder, Children for Breastfeeding  
Mobile 0918 921 2970

**Nona Castillo**

International Board Certified Lactation  
Consultant  
Founder, Children for Breastfeeding  
Mobile 0917 378 6134