

10 facts

Nestlé does not want you to know about its baby food business



"Calling all 'mums-to-be'" to join Nestlé's Baby World club in Singapore.

Nestlé management claims it only speaks to mothers 'through the label on its products'. Simply untrue.



Nestlé - for your world's number one child That's the claim on this Nestlé bill-board photographed in Taiwan in 2002.

Call on Nestlé management to stop putting profits before infant health

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Here are 10 facts Nestlé executives do not want you to know about the company's baby food marketing activities. You can help call them to account.

1. Nestlé breaks the international marketing requirements for baby foods more than any other company. These requirements were adopted by the World Health Assembly to ensure that mothers are not discouraged from breastfeeding and to ensure breastmilk substitutes are used safely if they are needed. 1.5 million infants die around the world every year because they are not breastfed. Where water is unsafe a bottle-fed child is up to 25 times more likely to die as a result of diarrhoea than a breastfed child.
 2. Nestlé is in court in India over its baby food labels, which failed to have required warnings in Hindi. The Managing Director of Nestlé India faces a prison sentence if Nestlé is convicted.
 3. When Zimbabwe was introducing its law on the marketing of baby foods, Nestlé threatened to close down its factory if this went ahead. The Minister of Health, Timothy Stamps, realised it was an 'idle threat' and the law was introduced despite Nestlé.
 4. Nestlé is not allowed to make direct or indirect contact with mothers, but in many countries targets them with baby clubs. For example, in Singapore a leaflet distributed to health centres says "Calling all mothers to be".
 5. Nestlé has been successfully prosecuted for breaking national laws. For example, in Costa Rica it was fined after repeatedly ignoring calls from the authorities to change its labels.
 6. A former employee in Pakistan, Syed Aamar Raza, has exposed corrupt practices, including bribing of doctors, implicating staff at the highest level of the company. Aamar says he was threatened when he raised this with managers. He remains in hiding and hasn't seen his wife or two young children three years. Nestlé conducted a so-called 'external audit' but banned the auditors from contacting Aamar or health groups. They could only interview doctors from a list provided by Nestlé.
 7. Nestlé is the target of a boycott in 20 countries because of its unethical and irresponsible marketing of baby foods.
 8. Nestlé (UK) leads the company's public relations offensive on the baby milk issue. But it fails to convince, losing public debate with Baby Milk Action (a video of a recent debate can be requested from Baby Milk Action). Nestlé is officially the UK's 'least ethical company' according to a survey conducted by Ethical Consumer Magazine.
 9. In November 2000 the European Parliament held a Public Hearing into Nestlé malpractice. Although management told shareholders months before that they welcomed the Hearing, they refused to send a representative. At the time, Nestlé objected to the presence of expert witnesses from the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN). Later Nestlé claimed none of its 230,000 employees was available.
 10. In May 1999 a ruling was published against Nestlé by the UK Advertising Standards Authority (ASA). Nestlé claimed in an advertisement that it markets infant formula "ethically and responsibly". The ASA found that Nestlé could not support other claims in the face of evidence provided by the campaigning group Baby Milk Action.
- Nestlé makes a profit while others count the cost.