

Follow-on formulas: are they necessary? should they be promoted?

BABY MILK ACTION



The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, adopted by the World Health Assembly in 1981, prohibits the promotion of all breastmilk substitutes and “any food being marketed or otherwise represented as a partial or total replacement for breast milk, whether or not suitable for that purpose.”

Follow-on milks were invented by companies following the adoption of the *International Code* in a cynical strategy to get round the Code's restrictions. Tobacco companies have used similar strategies, for example creating high street holiday firms with the same brand name as cigarettes. Concern about the promotion of these milks caused the World Health Assembly to pass a Resolution (WHA Res 39.28) in 1986 describing these milks as ‘not necessary’.

When follow-on milks were first introduced into the UK in the mid 1980s their promotion caused much confusion and many very young babies were fed on them. There was an outcry from health professionals who feared a return to the days of National Dried Milk with a high solute load, causing babies to suffer hypernatraemia. The rationale for follow-on milks put forward at the time by European Scientists (ESPGHAN) was mainly economic - it was thought that when an infant moves onto complementary feeding highly refined and expensive infant formulas are not necessary. But low prices exacerbate the problem by encouraging early use. Today the product retails at a high price but money-off coupons, discounts and prizes are offered - the very worst option! In addition the marketing relies heavily on health claims, promoting the supposed benefits of extra iron etc. These claims have yet to be proven - much of the research (funded by industry) compares follow on milks with cow's milk rather than infant formula. Indeed high amounts of iron added to formulas pose several risks for infants. There is less iron present in breastmilk, but it is much better absorbed by the baby. European scientists are now urging caution and recommending several changes to follow-on milks, bringing their composition closer to infant formulas. The nutritional need for follow-on milks remains a mystery. The commercial advantage is clear.

The World Health Assembly recommends that infants be exclusively breastfed for 6 months with continued breastfeeding for up to 2 years of age or beyond. Any substance replacing that part of the child's diet best provided by breastmilk during this period is, therefore, a breastmilk substitute.

FOLLOW ON MILK PROMOTION IN THE UK

Below, left and centre: Milupa's advertisements in *Pregnancy and Birth* magazine for parents (April/May 2004) imply that its *Aptamil* formula is equivalent to mother's milk. The *Aptamil* package itself promotes the whole range of milks: 1, 2 and 3. The only identification is the highlighted number. **Below, right:** A similar advertisement appears in *RCM Midwives Journal* (December 2003), but here the 1 and 2 are highlighted on the pack shots. Close examination of the advertisements and packs reveals a difference between the baby image shown. Where the pack is formula number 3, the figure is an human infant. Where it is number 1 (the infant formula) the figure is a humanized bear. All violate the International Code. The adverts blatantly promote 'prebiotics' ingredients that have not yet been proven to be effective or safe in formulas.

Every mum's breastmilk is unique, specially created for her baby, to provide everything her little one needs for healthy growth and development.

As well as many other important nutrients, breastmilk is rich in prebiotics. Prebiotics are special nutrients that stimulate the growth of friendly bacteria within the digestive system, which helps to support a baby's natural defences.

Prebiotics also gently support a baby's digestion, which is why breastfed babies often have soft stools - a good thing for any baby.

To find out more about prebiotics ask your Healthcare Professional or simply give us a call.

careline 08457 623 628

CONTAINS PREBIOTICS

NOURISHING BABY'S BODY AND MIND

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Milupa Aptamil Forward is proud to announce it now contains prebiotics.

Prebiotics are special nutrients, found naturally in breastmilk. They stimulate the growth of friendly bacteria within the digestive system, which helps to support a baby's natural defences.

Milupa Aptamil Forward is the **only** follow-on milk that contains prebiotics, nucleotides and 2 DHA's, so you can be assured your little one's getting the best follow-on milk there is.

To find out more information on prebiotics simply give us a call.

careline 08457 623 628

NOW CONTAINS PREBIOTICS

NOURISHING BABY'S BODY AND MIND

Keep their natural defences fighting fit

Prebiotics in breastmilk are special nutrients which continually feed the friendly bacteria naturally present in baby's large intestine. Friendly bacteria are an integral part of the baby's natural defences.

After an extensive ten year Research and Development programme, Milupa has now added PREBIOTICS to their Aptamil range which provide the best support for a bottlefed baby's natural defences.^{1,2} Only breastmilk is better.

Aptamil

IMPORTANT NOTES

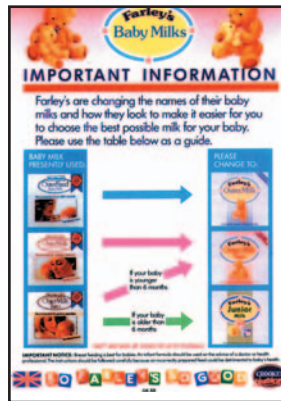
References: 1. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 2. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 3. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 4. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 5. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 6. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 7. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 8. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 9. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128. 10. *Journal of paediatrics and child health* 2 (2007) 123-128.

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NOURISHING BABY'S BODY AND MIND

Enlarging the company name to promote the whole range of milks

Farley's like other companies, has progressively increased the prominence of its company name on its labels, whilst reducing the size of the age of use information. In **1988** (right) it removed its baby images, replacing them with a humanized bear image (prohibited by the Code). In **1995** (far right) when media advertising of infant formula is banned, the company name increases again and takes over as the brand - the type of milk is hardly visible.



Advertising on television exacerbates the confusion.

In a 30-second flash - the packshot along side a nutrition or promotional claim - in the case of the Cow&Gate advert on the right 'organic' - is enough to mislead and promote the whole range. The survey done by NCT website found that 36% of 7,729 respondents believe that they had seen an infant formula ad in the preceding 4 weeks.

Cow & Gate TV advert on UK



In **2004** Farley's relaunched its labels (above left) with a 'contemporary new pack design' dominated by the company name, with the other details lost. This label change was supported with a high profile advertising campaign showing a packshot of the follow-on milk when addressed to the general public, and infant formula when addressed to health workers. Otherwise the advertisements are almost identical. The text claims 'Every mum wants what's best for baby, and that's where Farley's helps. The unique formula of Farley's Follow-on Milk works in harmony with nature' and 'to improve your baby's immune system, Farley's Follow-on Milk contains special protective nutrients.' The health worker advertisement on the right, showing a child of the same age claims: 'Nucleotides help babies improve their immune system. You'll find them in mother's milk and Farley's'.

In 1984 when Wyeth introduced follow-on milks to the UK (labelled as suitable from 4 months) there was an outcry from health professionals. Prof Michael Crawford of London Zoo analysed some samples. He said they were more like Rhinoceros milk than human milk. Wyeth eventually changed the labelling to 6 months.

Article 9.6.5 of the draft revised Codex Standard on infant formula calls for labelling which avoids any risk of confusion between infant formulas and follow-on formulas.

This Briefing paper is prepared by Baby Milk Action in June 2004. For further information about the campaign to bring the European Directives into line with UN recommendations contact:
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