

**For immediate release
June 27, 2007
Infant Feeding Action Coalition (INFACT) Canada**

INFACT Canada urges Canadians to boycott Nestlé products during the July 2-8 International Nestlé-Free Week. A media conference will be held at 11 am on July 3 at the Church of the Holy Trinity, downtown Toronto.

Nestlé's dangerous marketing of infant formula continues to put infants at risk for illness and death

Nestlé Boycott groups around the world have declared the week of July 2-8 to be **International Nestlé-Free Week**. Nestlé is the target of the world's largest international consumer boycott because its aggressive marketing of infant formula and baby foods continue to endanger infant lives and violate rules set by the World Health Organization. On July 2, campaigners on four continents are calling for those who are not already supporting the boycott to **not** buy any Nestlé products for the **International Nestlé-Free Week July 2 -8**.

"Nestlé's marketing practices are unconscionable. The company continues to promote its baby formula for the sake of profits while knowingly causing immeasurable damage to infant health," said Ben Spurr, Nestlé Boycott coordinator for INFACT Canada. "The World Health Organization estimates that 1.5 million infants die every year because they were not adequately breastfed.¹ Low breastfeeding rates in many countries can largely be attributed to systematic, aggressive advertising of infant formula, which misleads mothers into believing that artificial baby milks are what's best for their babies."

Infant formula is a low-quality nutritional substitute for breastmilk that provides no immunological protection to infants when they are most vulnerable. Formula use increases greatly the risk of gastroenteritis and acute respiratory disease, the major causes of death for non-breastfed infants. Furthermore, infant formula requires clean water and a literate parent in order to be prepared, both of which are scarce in many parts of the world. In the poorest countries, formula use often leads to increased malnutrition, illness and death.

Despite these facts, Nestlé is currently operating promotional campaigns throughout the world to push its formula to mothers.

In 1981, the World Health Assembly endorsed the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes, a document which sets the rules for

¹ State of the World's Children 2001. Unicef.

marketing of infant formula so that it does not undermine breastfeeding. Today, monitoring by the International Baby Food Action Network (IBFAN)² shows that Nestlé continues to be responsible for more violations of the Code and subsequent, relevant Resolutions than any other company. Nestlé's lack of accountability for the consequences of its formula promotion and its lack of compliance to the marketing rules set by the WHO have made it the worthy target of the longest and largest global consumer boycott and now, the International Nestlé-Free Week.

Nestlé is considered the market leader in the lucrative formula market, and as such it sets the marketing trends for the rest of the industry. By targeting it for boycott action, campaigners hope to reform the marketing practices of the entire global infant food industry.

The Nestlé boycott has been launched by groups in 20 countries. Those promoting International Nestlé-Free Week in this, its first year, include:

Cameroon Link (Cameroon)
INFAC-Canada (Canada)
RIBN (Italy)
ARUGAAN (the Philippines)
NAFIA (Sweden)
Baby Milk Action (United Kingdom)

Campaign activities for International Nestlé-Free Week in different countries include demonstrations, media campaigns, the launch of new boycott merchandise and appeals for boycotters to call Nestlé customer service lines. This will be the first annual Nestlé-Free Week, and it is expected that other countries will mark the week in future years.

***** Media Conference *****

July 3 @ 11 am
Church of the Holy Trinity
10 Trinity Square
Toronto, ON

All media welcome.

For more information contact

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² Breaking the Rules 2004. Penang: IBFAN, 2004.

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Notes for the media:

1. In the first two months of life, an infant who is not exclusively breastfed is 25 times more likely to die from diarrhoea and four times more likely to die from pneumonia than a breastfed baby.³ Babies who aren't breastfed are also at greater risk for cancer, obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disease in later life.⁴
2. It is estimated that Nestlé controls about 35 percent of the commercial baby foods market, and promotes formula in every country on the planet.
3. The International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes was drafted by the World Health Assembly in 1981 as a guideline to protecting infant health from the undue influence of formula companies. It states, among other things, that there must be no formula promotion directly to mothers or through the health care system. In promotional material Nestlé claims to follow the Code, but independent monitoring easily provides proof to the contrary.
4. Nestlé's violations of the Code include granting doctors in Armenia and Bulgaria a commission each time they recommend Nestlé formula,⁵ and advertising cheap, unsafe products such as dried milk powder or coffee sweetener as breastmilk substitutes because the cost of genuine formula is prohibitive for many families.
5. The Nestlé Boycott first began in 1977, and over the past 30 years has been successful in pressuring the company to stop some of its more egregious practices.
6. Nestlé's malpractice is well documented and has been exposed as recently as last month by both [London's Guardian newspaper](#) and [UNICEF](#).

For further information and images see
<http://www.babymilkaction.org/resources/boycott/Nestléfree.html>

³ Press Release: *Breastfeeding can save over 1 million lives yearly*. Unicef, July 30 2004

⁴ [Risks of Formula Feeding](#). Toronto: INFACT, 2006.

⁵ [Breaking the Rules 2004](#). Penang: IBFAN, 2004.