

IMS Act Bans

Advertisement and promotion of baby foods/feeding bottles

Incentives or gifts on sales of baby foods/feeding bottles

Direct contact with pregnant women

Promotion in the hospitals

Sponsorship of health workers and their associations

Funding of seminar or research work by health workers

Fixing commissions on sales



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putting child nutrition
at the forefront
of social change

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WORLD BREASTFEEDING PROTECTION DAY MAY 21ST

COMPELLING ENFORCEMENT OF THE
IMS ACT IN INDIA

About the day


Breastfeeding is normal food and nourishes the baby lifelong, protects the baby from disease and deaths. According to an international study, annually, 100,000 child deaths could be saved in India if breastfeeding practices were adequate. Baby food companies continue to attack and replace breastfeeding with their products; blatantly breaking the Indian law to protect breastfeeding, the [Infant Milk Substitutes Feeding Bottles, and Infant Foods \(Regulation of Production, Supply and Distribution\) Act 1992, and Amendment Act 2003.\(IMS Act\)](#). E.g. companies sponsor doctors' meetings and resort to many other marketing tactics to increase sales. **The World Breastfeeding Protection Day** highlights that women and children need protection from this onslaught of bad marketing of baby foods.

Why this day?

On May 21, 1981, the World Health Assembly (WHA) endorsed one of the most powerful tools to protect breastfeeding- the ["International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes"](#) . It recognised that commercial marketing of baby foods is harmful to the health of infants. Decades of relentless struggle of mothers, health professionals, public health experts, feminists, activists, against corporate push to powdered milk formula, made it possible. Every 2 years, the WHA added caveats to the Code to strengthen the level of protection. As a follow up, India enacted the IMS Act in 1992 and 2003. It prohibits any type of advertising or promotion of baby foods/feeding bottles for children under the age 2. In addition, it bans directly contacting mothers, giving free samples, discounts or other gifts on sales, promotion in health facilities, sponsorship of meetings of health workers or their associations, research etc. In 2022, India will celebrate 30 years of the legal protection. This day is indeed a historical moment for mothers and children of the world.

Action Ideas

It is in your hands to pass on the mantle of protecting our moms and babies to our next generation, to other families, and to your friends. Following are examples of doable actions.

- Ask 5 friends to watch the movie ["TIGERS"](#) on [ZEE5](#) and discuss how they can make a difference. (invite if feasible)
- Participate in a national meeting on 21st May 'How breastfeeding is Under Attack'.
- Translate and share the poster and brochure with friends, family, students, or other contacts.
- Conduct online awareness on the IMS Act
- Add the Logo  to your status and profile pic and invite others to do so.
- Put up the poster in a hospital where babies deliver
- Contact an ad agency to write 5-7 key provisions of the IMS Act on a wall or bill board(pro bono)
- Give a dissertation to a student in nutrition and health sector.
- Address a meeting of the chemists in your town.

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