

General Circular No: 01-15/2012

Office of the Secretary of Health,
Ministry of Health,
Suwasiripaya,
Rev. Baddegama Wimalawansa Thero Mawatha,
Colombo 10.
24th March 2012.

To: All Provincial Secretaries of Health
All DDGs of Ministry of Health
All Provincial Directors of Health Services
All Regional Directors of Health Services
Director/Family Health Bureau
Director/ Private Health Sector Development
Director/ Medical Services
Director/ Environmental and Occupational Health
Director/ Nutrition
Director/ Nutrition Coordination Division
Director/ Health Education Bureau
Director/ Food Control Unit
Director/ NIHS
Chief MOH/CMC
All Heads of Institutions

Implementation of the Sri Lanka Code for the Promotion, Protection and Support of Breast Feeding and Marketing of Designated products

It has been brought to my attention the frequent acts of violation of the provisions of the Sri Lanka Code for the Promotion, Protection and Support of Breastfeeding and Marketing of Designated Products, by healthcare staff and milk food industry. This Code, gazetted under Consumer Affairs Authority Act, is considered as the main legal instrument to protect breastfeeding practices and to regulate marketing of infant food and related products. Any violation of it is considered as a cognizable offence (an offence for which arrest can be made without obtaining a warrant and investigation can be conducted without the permission of a magistrate) under the legal system of Sri Lanka.

The Code is aimed at providing safe, adequate and optimal nutrition for infants and young children by protection, promotion and support of breast feeding and by ensuring proper use of all formula milk preparations used in infants.

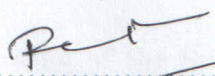
The products covered by the code are called designated products and include:

- Infant formulae
- Soya milk
- Malted milk
- Condensed milk
- Feeding bottles, teats, pacifiers etc.

- 1) Promotion of designated products among the public by advertisements or by any other means is prohibited. (Sub section 2.1 of Article II)
- 2) Advertisement or promotion of any complementary food for infants under the age of 6 months is prohibited. (Sub section 2.6 of Article II)
- 3) Use of the Health Care System, whether public or private, to display or to distribute any designated product or complementary food or promotional material of the above designated products or complementary food or their manufacturers or distributors should not be permitted. (Sub section 4.2 of Article IV)
- 4) Donations, free supplies or supplies at a price lower than the wholesale price of the above designated products or complementary food should not be permitted in the health care system. (Sub section 4.5 of Article IV)
- 5) Donation of designated products can be done during disaster situations only under the specific conditions of an infant losing his/her mother or when the request for supplementation is based on medical advice. These supplies should be continued for as long as the infant requires it and should not be used as a sales inducement.
(Sub section 4.7 of Article IV)
- 6) No manufacturer or distributor or their agent should provide to an individual health worker any information including scientific or factual information regarding infant or young child feeding or any gifts or benefits including but not limited to fellowships, study and research grants, funding to attend seminars, conferences or to continuing educational courses. Any such provision to a nationally recognized professional association should be made with the concurrence of the Monitoring Committee described below. (Sub section 5.1, 5.4 and 5.6 of Article V)
- 7) Samples of any designated product or complementary food or equipment or utensils used for their preparation shall not be provided to health care workers nor provided by them to a pregnant woman or to a mother of an infant or young child or any member of their families. (Sub section 5.3 of Article V)
- 8) Information regarding designated products or complementary food or brand names or logos shall not appear in diagnosis cards, immunization cards, prescription pads, calendars and similar records or formats used in the health care system, either public or private. (Sub section 5.7 of Article V)

- 9) Further, the Code requires professionals and professional groups to draw the attention of manufacturers, distributors or suppliers to activities which are inconsistent with the provisions of the Code so that appropriate action could be taken. (Sub section 8.2 of Article VIII)
- 10) Any violation observed should be promptly reported to Director/ Maternal and Child Health, Family Health Bureau, 231, De Saram Place, Colombo 10, who is the Secretary to the Monitoring Committee on the Code, appointed by the Hon. Minister of Health. Violations are discussed in the committee initially and sent to the Consumer Affairs Authority for further actions.

Please bring the contents of this circular to the attention of all relevant healthcare personnel in order to ensure successful implementation of the Sri Lanka Code for the Promotion, Protection and Support of Breastfeeding and Marketing of Designated products. The full version of the code can be found at www.familyhealth.gov.lk


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Secretary/Health

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Cc: Additional Secretary/ Medical Services
Director General of Health Services
All Medical Officers of Maternal and Child Health
All Medical Officers of Health
Chairman/SLMC
President/ Government Medical Officers Association
President/ Sri Lanka College of Obstetricians & Gynaecologists
President/ Sri Lanka College of Paediatricians
President/ College of Community Physicians of Sri Lanka
President/ Sri Lanka College of Medical Administrators
President/ Perinatal Society of Sri Lanka
President/ College of General Practitioners of Sri Lanka
President/ Nutrition Society of Sri Lanka