

## Feeding your baby is your decision – but who is influencing you?

Take this quiz (*Is each statement true or false?*)

- Advertisement and marketing can influence your decision
- No brand of manufactured milk for babies is the nearest to human milk
- It is your right to breastfeed anywhere you want
- There is a law in Ireland that limits marketing of manufactured milk for babies

Answers

- a. *True. Companies spend a lot of money on ads and marketing so that people think well of the company and more of their products are bought. If the marketing was not working then money would not be spent on it.*



Think of marketing that you see – for example, a tired mother relaxing in a bath. You may not rush out and buy the product but it may put the idea in your head that breastfeeding is hard work and that being a mother would be easier if you used a manufactured milk. You may think also that this is a nice company that cares about mothers. Pregnant or new mothers see this marketing and so do family, friends and health workers. Their attitudes can be influenced and they can influence your decisions.

- b. *True. If you stand on a ladder you are nearer to touching the moon than if you are on the ground – but can you touch the moon?*



All manufactured milk for babies sold in the EU must have the same minimum ingredients. If an added ingredient was proved to make a difference then that ingredient would be required in all milks. Ingredients change very frequently and marketing tells you the milk is new and improved, but didn't they say that last year's version was the nearest also? Manufactured milks are widely available only for the last 60 years. None of these manufactured milks are the same as milk made by human mothers for human babies for the last 200,000 years.

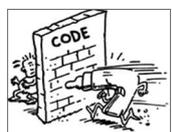
- c. *True. You do not need to ask permission to breastfeed in a café or public place.*

The café staff have a duty to protect your right to breastfeed free of harassment. If they do not protect your right they are allowing discrimination to occur on their premises which is against the law. Surveys in Ireland have shown that most people are ok with a baby feeding near them. If marketing campaigns are trying to suggest that it is not ok to breastfeed away from home pause and think. Is this campaign designed to influence attitudes and raise doubts about breastfeeding? If mothers don't breastfeed away from home does this result in more manufactured milk bought for babies?



- d. *True. Companies that provide manufactured milks for babies may not have direct contact with pregnant women, new parents or their families. The law also says that information about these milks must tell about the costs and risks of using them.*

The law is there to protect babies, whatever way they are fed, by having clear evidence-based information rather than marketing hype. The law is there for over 20 years – but is it enforced? The Irish law is less protective than the International Code of Marketing. Irish law only refers to the first six months.



**Your decision may be restricted if you cannot easily get correct information and if you are bombarded by marketing of an attitude or of a product;  
if the health workers also receive their information through company marketing;  
and if laws to protect you and your baby are not enforced.**

***Think about where your information comes from and make an informed decision***

This is general information. Discuss your specific needs with your midwife, nurse, lactation consultant or doctor.

Like more info sheets? Visit the BFHI web site



The Baby Friendly Initiative in Ireland is grant-aided by the Health Service Executive  
BFHI Link is on-line at [www.babyfriendly.ie](http://www.babyfriendly.ie)

