

Roles and Responsibilities: Infant feeding in an emergency for babies aged 0–12 months

The following organisations and groups have roles and responsibilities to help make sure that babies aged 0–12 months are fed safely in an emergency.

Read this document in conjunction with the Ministry of Health's *Position Statement: Infant feeding in an emergency for babies aged 0–12 months*.

Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Groups

CDEM Groups are responsible at the regional level for planning and coordinating the provision of household goods and services and other essential items to people in the community who have been displaced or who are sheltering at home. CDEM Groups will:

- encourage women who are breastfeeding to continue to breastfeed as normal
- where possible, support families to buy, safely prepare and use their own supplies of infant formula
- decline, and not seek, donations of infant formula, including donations of follow-on formula and toddler milks
- distribute only infant formula, feeding equipment and other essential feeding supplies that have been provided on behalf of the Civil Defence Controller¹ and according to the Controller's assessment of the specific emergency
- distribute infant formula only to families that need it – making sure that infant formula and feeding equipment for infants are not included in the mix of household goods that are distributed generally
- together with the designated emergency response point-of-contact from the district health board, arrange to return or remove unsolicited donations of infant formula.

Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management (MCDEM)

MCDEM is responsible at the national level for coordinating advice on providing household goods and services and other essential items (including food, water, groceries, medication, cooking fuel, clothing, bedding, sanitation and pet food) to people who have been displaced or who are sheltering at home following an emergency. MCDEM will:

- encourage women who are breastfeeding to continue to breastfeed as normal
- decline, and not seek, donations of infant formula, including donations of follow-on formula and toddler milks
- guide CDEM Groups to plan for sourcing infant formula and feeding equipment and distributing it only to people who need it in an emergency
- include the Ministry of Health's *Position Statement: Infant feeding in an emergency for babies aged 0–12 months* (the Position Statement) in relevant planning, operational and guidance documents.

¹ The person who is the National Controller in accordance with section 10 of the Civil Defence Emergency Management Act 2002, or a Group Controller appointed under section 26 of that Act.

District health boards (DHBs) (emergency response in the community only)

DHBs will have a designated contact for infant feeding in emergencies who can:

- promote the Position Statement in local emergency planning
- use the resources available on the Ministry of Health's website or on Health EMIS
- access DHB clinical experts in infant feeding if expert advice is needed in an emergency (eg, for newborn feeding and supporting women to start breastfeeding again)
- promote the Position Statement with DHB emergency responders (ie, primary care responders, public health responders)
- decline, and not seek, donations of infant formula, including donations of follow-on formula and toddler milks
- arrange to return or remove unsolicited donations of infant formula
- provide feedback on the Position Statement and its accompanying consumer resource for parents and caregivers to the Ministry of Health (via the Director – Emergency Management)
- ensure emergency business continuity plans for infant feeding reflect these roles accurately.

Ministry of Health

The Ministry of Health will publish a Position Statement and supporting guidance material for parents and caregivers (including this document) for other agencies to use. The Position Statement is to align New Zealand's emergency planning and response system, health services, international obligations and international best practice evidence for feeding babies in an emergency. In particular, it needs to combine the guidance from:

- *World Health Assembly Resolution 63.23 (2010) and its referenced guidance Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies: Operational guidance for emergency relief staff and programme managers (Version 2.1)*, February 2007
- *International Code of Marketing of Breast-milk Substitutes*, World Health Organization, 1981
- *Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Healthy Infants and Toddlers*, Ministry of Health, 2008
- *National Health Emergency Plan*, Ministry of Health, 2015
- *Feeding Your Baby in an Emergency*, Ministry of Health, 2015.

Other relevant plans, references and policy statements are:

- *Donated Goods Management Planning: Civil Defence Emergency Management best practice guide [BPG2/06]*, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, 2006
- *Welfare Services in an Emergency: Director's Guideline for Civil Defence Emergency Management Groups and agencies with responsibilities for welfare services in an emergency [DGL11/15]*, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, 2015
- *The National Civil Defence Emergency Management (CDEM) Plan*, Ministry of Civil Defence and Emergency Management, 2015
- Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative (www.babyfriendly.org.nz/going-baby-friendly/baby-friendly-hospital-initiative)
- Baby Friendly Community Initiative (www.babyfriendly.org.nz/going-baby-friendly/baby-friendly-community-initiative/seven-point-plan).

The National Health Coordination Centre will support and advise DHB staff on:

- declining, and not seeking, donations of infant formula, including donations of follow-on formula and toddler milks
- removing unsolicited donations of infant formula.

The Ministry will coordinate the roles of Healthline and PlunketLine in supporting infant feeding in an emergency.

PlunketLine and Healthline

PlunketLine and Healthline will use the Ministry of Health's Position Statement and supporting guidance material and consumer resource to develop scripts for their call centres to use when needed.

Food industry and infant formula manufacturers

The Ministry of Health urges the food industry and infant formula manufacturers to:

- if asked, help the relevant Civil Defence Controller to source infant formula, feeding equipment and safe bottled water according to the Controller's assessment of the specific emergency
- support MCDEM's role as the New Zealand agency responsible for emergency planning and policy, including MCDEM's policy on managing donated goods
- support the Ministry of Health's Position Statement and its accompanying consumer resource for parents and caregivers
- support section 6.6 of *The Infant Nutrition Council Code of Practice for the Marketing of Infant Formula in New Zealand* (2012): 'in the case of emergency relief, the donations are in accordance with national emergency preparedness plans and supporting documents'.

Other government departments and non-governmental organisations (NGOs)

The Ministry of Health urges other government departments and NGOs to:

- understand MCDEM's policy on managing donated goods and in particular that people should make donations of money to the emergency relief effort rather than goods
- understand the Ministry of Health's Position Statement and its accompanying consumer resource for parents and caregivers
- align their own policies and practices for infant feeding in emergencies with those published by MCDEM and the Ministry of Health.