

An **IBFAN-ICDC** report on baby food marketing practices



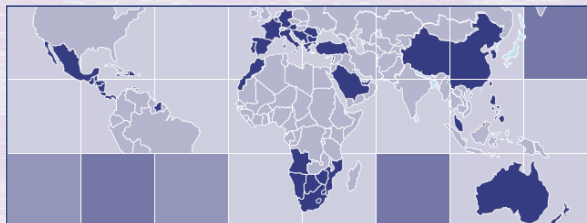
This page forms part of the global monitoring report – Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2010. Companies' marketing behaviour is measured against the International Code of Marketing of Breastmilk Substitutes and WHO resolutions.

Novalac Company profile & Code violations

The Executive Summary to Breaking the Rules, Stretching the Rules 2010 is available at www.ibfan.org

United Pharmaceuticals SA, a French company, makes **Novalac**, a range of formula and complementary products marketed in more than 50 countries on 5 continents. Although United Pharma seems to be the main manufacturer, this section is identified by the brand name **Novalac** as its marketing is handled by different companies, principally, Bayer AG in Asia, Latin America and Oceania.

Novalac's range of infant formula is presented by all its distributors as solutions to common infant feeding problems such as colic, constipation, diarrhoea and reflux.



Darkened areas indicate Novalac's market reach

Any problem? There is a Novalac solution.

There is a **Novalac** formula for infants who are at risk of allergy and even one for those who wake constantly due to hunger. **Novalac's** marketing approach harps on the "high incidence of these infant feeding problems" thus optimising parents' wish to be relaxed when crying is reduced and babies are contented; conditions which are easiest achieved through breastfeeding.

BTR reported in its last monitoring cycle that Bayer AG was exploiting the **Novalac** ideal in Australia with its **Infra Nurture** campaign that "put infant feeding problems to bed". Gimmicks bearing the **Infra Nurture** logo depict lights-on in homes because babies are awake and lights-out after **Novalac** products send baby (and parents) to sleep. These gimmicks aimed at medical professionals and pharmacies are enticing for parents too. The appalling campaign created an uproar among breastfeeding groups and mothers while competitors seethed. Bayer, a relatively new player in Australia, was not a signatory to Marketing in Australia of Infant Formula agreement (MAIF) until 2006. In January 2009, an advisory panel of MAIF found that Bayer had breached the agreement with the ad.

As a result, the **Novalac** and **Infra Nurture** websites in Australia and New Zealand are now noticeably more restrained and come with cautions, warnings and legal disclaimers about legal compliance and liability.

The same cannot be said for Novalac's websites elsewhere.

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Brands

Novalac Stage 1 & 2
Novalac Reflux
Novalac Colic
Novalac Constipation
Novalac Diarrhoea
Novalac Sweet Dreams
Novalac HA
Novalac Diastasee
Novalac Multicereales

Logos



China



Australia

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Promotion to the public and in shops

- Article 5.1 of the Code prohibits advertising and all other forms of promotion of products under the scope of the Code.
- Article 5.3 of the Code bans promotional devices at the retail level.

Outside Oceania, Novalac websites continue to be promotional and prominently use images of babies to promote and idealise their products.

- In Austria, **Novalac's** website says "Well-being for every baby", "Novalac as individual as your baby" and "exclusively available at your pharmacy." (<http://www.novalac.at>) (see 1)
- In China, mothers are called upon to understand milk powder and to consider their babies needs with **Novalac** being offered as the solution. (www.novalac.com.cn/community/productsDiscussion.aspx?r=0.20414512) (see 2)
- In Germany
 - Novalac is promoted "for parents relaxation and baby's well-being." (www.novalac.de) (see 3)
 - an internet pharmacy Advamed (<http://www.advamed.de/>) offers different types of Novalac formulas at reduced prices. (see 4)
- In Korea, crying babies and their feeding problems get fixed by **Novalac**. (<http://www.novalac.co.kr/2009/conditions/conditions00.asp>) (see 5)

Ansicht	Artikel	Preis	Bestellen
	Novalac 1 Säuglings Milchmahrung 800 g Jetzt im Angebot! → Versand → Details	UVP 12,95 € 11,89 € (11g = 14,85) (inkl. 7% MwSt)	1 <input type="button" value="Bestellen"/> <small>nach oben</small>
	Novalac 2 Folge Milchmahrung 800 g Jetzt im Angebot! → Versand → Details	UVP 12,95 € 11,89 € (11g = 14,85) (inkl. 7% MwSt)	1 <input type="button" value="Bestellen"/> <small>nach oben</small>
		UVP 12,95 €	<input type="button" value="Bestellen"/>

All web pages accessed on 15 March 2010.

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- ❖ In Croatia, gifts with purchases are offered for every multiple purchase of Novalac formula over a period of six weeks. (see 6)
- ❖ In France, Menarini Pédiate distributrice distributes in pharmacies a booklet "Prescribe, Advise Novalac" which contains descriptions of no less than 11 Novalac products "adapted to each digestive problem of the infant". Regurgitation, allergy risks, gas, gluttonous greedy babies and even normal infants, all have a special formula. The important notice about the superiority of breastfeeding, as required by the Code, is sidelined to a hard-to-read vertical bar in very small font, on page 1. The requisite text has been modified to include the statement that "baby milks can replace breastfeeding when it is not chosen, stopped early or must be supplemented."

The accompanying folder for Novalac prescription pads starts with a statement "Every baby, its own Novalac" and "Novalac – a complete range for every digestive problem". (see 7)

- ❖ In Malaysia where the voluntary Code prohibits companies from providing product information to mothers, a Novacare educational leaflet found in a pharmacy discusses problems with regurgitation without reference to any product name. The leaflet bears the slogan "Helps you care better for your little one" and shows the product logo. It also provides a toll free number for mothers to contact the company which the Malaysian Code also prohibits. (see 8)
- ❖ In Morocco, a French poster calendar found at a hospital in Tangiers show a picture of a bottle feeding baby above the entire range of Novalac formula products. A French booklet "Because each baby is unique" promotes the various Novalac formulas 'adapted' to each and every 'digestive problem' of infants. (see 9)



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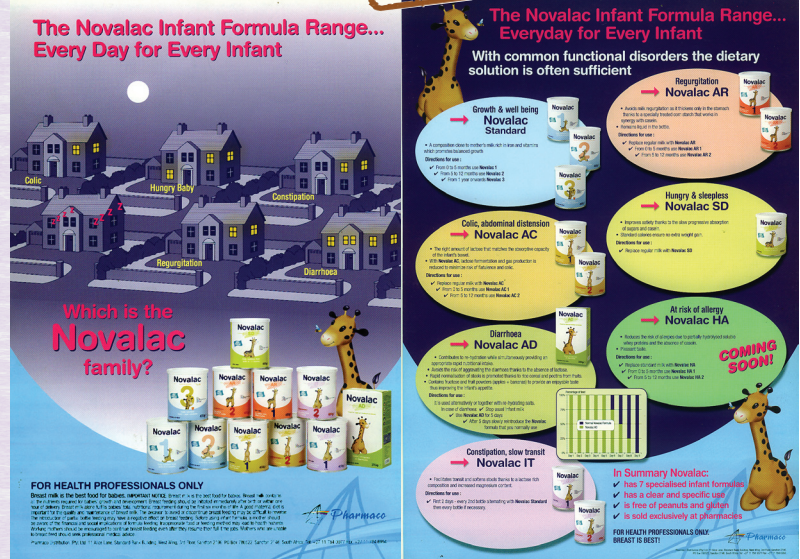
Promotion to health workers & health facilities

- Article 6.2 bans the promotion of products within the health care system.
- Article 6.3 prohibits the display of products, placards and posters or the distribution of company materials unless requested or approved by the government.
- Article 7.3 provides that there should be no financial or material inducement to promote products.

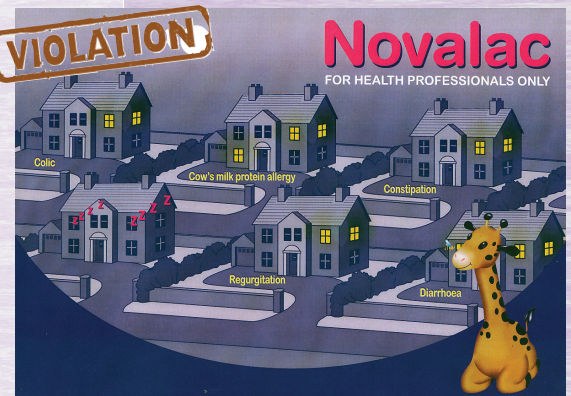
❖ In Botswana, a brochure originating from South Africa and intended for health professionals is titled “*The Novalac Infant Formula Range ... Everyday for Every Infant*” implying that it is for all babies. Echoing the same message as its earlier Australian cousins but without the sophisticated and entertaining gimmick, the South African version shows 6 houses. Five bedrooms are lit-up to represent sleepless occupants caused by infant ‘disorders’. The sixth household has all lights off with signs of deep slumber. Next to this ‘peaceful home’ is the question “*Which is the Novalac family?*” The next part of this ad explains that “*with common functional disorders the dietary solution is often sufficient*”; this is followed by the ‘solution’ – a full range of **Novalac** products. Among some of the ‘common functional disorders’ affecting infants are said to be “*Growth & well being*” and “*hungry and sleepless*” ! Both brochures violate the Botswana law which requires that information on infant feeding to the health profession are restricted to scientific and factual matters and are distributed only with the approval of the government. (see 1)

❖ A miniature version of the above brochure is reproduced as invitation to health professionals to attend a **Novalac** presentation in Gaborone, Botswana. The opening statement on the invitation: “*At last, an infant formula solution for those small, troublesome “GI” problems....*” (see 2)

❖ In the UAE, tear-off prescription pads presenting the **Novalac** range as “*adapted formula that work*” and “*Now ..available in super and hyper markets*” are distributed to doctors so they can make their recommendations on tick boxes against each type of formula deemed suitable for the individual infant. (see 3)



(Above and below) Promotional materials by Pharmaco of South Africa



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