



United States Breastfeeding
COMMITTEE
PROTECTING • PROMOTING • SUPPORTING

Letter Sent: September 1, 2007

To the Editor:

The United States Breastfeeding Committee congratulates *The Washington Post* for the publishing the article “**HHS Toned Down Breastfeeding Ads – Formula Industry Urged Softer Campaign.**” The government’s campaign was designed to first attract public attention and then to provide information regarding the health risks of using a substitute for human milk. With such information, young families could make a truly informed choice regarding how they will feed their babies. Unfortunately interference by the infant formula industry resulted in the public being given less than the full set of the available facts.

The Department of Health and Human Services has also declined to publicize the findings of the recent report of a systematic literature review prepared for the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, entitled “**Breastfeeding and Maternal and Infant Health Outcomes in Developed Countries.**” This review notes breastfeeding is associated with reduced risks of ear infections, gastroenteritis, lower respiratory infections, atopic dermatitis, asthma, obesity, type 1 and 2 diabetes, childhood leukemia, sudden infant death syndrome and necrotizing enterocolitis as well as breast and ovarian cancer and maternal postpartum depression. Perhaps *The Washington Post* can help young families acquire the information needed to make informed infant feeding decisions by publishing a review of the key findings from this report.

Sincerely,

Audrey J. Naylor, MD, DrPH
Chair, United States Breastfeeding Committee