



australasian society of clinical immunology and allergy

5 August 2019

Ms Christel Leemhuis
Director Food Policy
Australian Department of Health
Canberra ACT 2601
Email: Christel.Leemhuis@health.gov.au

Dear Ms Leemhuis,

We write to you on behalf of ASCIA, the Australasian Society of Clinical Immunology and Allergy, regarding the Australian National Breast Feeding Strategy, which has recently been released. <http://ow.ly/M72c30phozL>

Whilst we were pleased to read that ASCIA Guidelines for Infant Feeding and Allergy Prevention were mentioned on pages 38-39, under the heading "What has been achieved", we are very concerned about the following statement on page 39, under the heading "What needs more attention". Our main issue is that the last two sentences appear to imply that ASCIA Guidelines for Infant Feeding and Allergy Prevention are not evidence-based and have been influenced commercially, which is definitely not the case.

- *Feedback from the public consultation noted that the phrase 'not before 4 months' in the ASCIA Guidelines: Infant Feeding and Allergy Prevention is confusing and is not necessary because the antigenic quantities of proteins enter breastmilk, so exclusively breastfed infants are exposed to them. **There is a need to prioritise accurate, authoritative and evidence-based messaging around the introduction of complementary foods from around 6 months. This messaging needs to be free from commercial influence.***

ASCIA Guidelines for Infant Feeding and Allergy Prevention ARE evidence-based and have NOT been influenced commercially. We therefore request that you revise the Australian National Breast Feeding Strategy document as a matter of urgency by moving these two sentences into a separate dot point and inserting the words **further** and **to continue** as shown below. If copies of the Australian National Breast Feeding Strategy have already been printed, then we request an erratum page be printed and inserted prior to distribution.

- ***There is a need to prioritise further accurate, authoritative and evidence-based messaging around the introduction of complementary foods from around 6 months. This messaging needs to continue to be free from commercial influence.***

We also suggest deleting the following wording on page 39, as it could imply that solid foods can be fed to infants under the age of 4 months, which ASCIA does not recommend:

... and is not necessary because the antigenic quantities of proteins enter breastmilk, so exclusively breastfed infants are exposed to them."

ASCIA is the peak professional body of clinical immunology and allergy specialists in Australia and New Zealand

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We look forward to your response.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Brynn Wainstein
ASCIA President



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Chair, ASCIA
Paediatric Committee



Jill Smith
ASCIA CEO