

## COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

### COMPETITION AND CONSUMER ACT 2010

#### **SAFETY WARNING NOTICE – Baby bottle self-feeding devices**

Pursuant to section 129(1)(a) and (b) of the Australian Consumer Law, which is Schedule 2 of the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010* (Cth), I, Stephen Jones, Assistant Treasurer, publish this notice to:

- state that the consumer goods specified below are under investigation to determine whether those goods will or may cause injury to any person, or whether a reasonably foreseeable use (including a misuse) of those goods will or may cause injury to any person; and
- warn of possible risks involved in the use of consumer goods of the kind specified below.

#### **Particulars of the consumer goods – baby bottle self-feeding devices**

Baby bottle self-feeding devices are designed to position or prop a bottle such that the liquid in the bottle flows into a baby's mouth without the need for assistance from a caregiver.

The devices generally fall under two categories:

##### *Self-feeding pillows*

These pillows include a bottle attachment and rest on a baby's chest propping the bottle in their mouth. They may also be called:

- 'Anti spitting pillows'
- 'Baby feeding bottle holders'
- 'Multifunctional portable baby feeding pillows'

##### *Hands free bottle holders*

These items attach to caregivers, babies, or objects. They are designed to allow a baby to self-feed by holding a bottle to their mouth. These can be wearable (such as bibs, slings, and props) or can be attached to objects (such as strollers, prams, and cots). They remove the need for the caregiver to hold the bottle.

**Figure 1: Examples of baby bottle self-feeding devices.**



## **Possible risks involved with the use of baby bottle self-feeding devices**

Baby bottle self-feeding devices pose a possible risk to babies from:

- choking
- aspiration pneumonia
- risk of suffocation
- ear infections.

Use of these devices is not recommended according to Commonwealth, and state and territory government's safe baby feeding advice which advises against propping up a bottle for a baby to feed and feeding a baby unsupervised. Further information is available at the [Commonwealth Department of Health website](#).

Internationally, Canada introduced a ban for structural devices used to position bottles to feed babies in 1977, Ireland introduced a ban for baby self-feeding pillows in 2022 and the UK Office for Product Safety and Standards issued a Product Safety Alert for all baby bottle self-feeding devices in 2022. There have been reports of infant fatalities associated with the use of baby bottle self-feeding devices overseas.

Baby bottle self-feeding devices increase the risk of:

### *Choking*

Children under the age of 3 are at particular risk of choking. They have not developed the reflex action to cough up objects or liquid in their throats. When babies are being prop fed, they cannot control or stop the flow from the bottle. Babies cannot pull away from it, spit it out, or signal that something is going wrong. The milk may continue to flow before the baby can swallow it. This can lead to gagging or choking, even when supervised. Choking can be silent, meaning caregivers may not notice it is happening.

### *Aspiration pneumonia*

Babies can end up breathing in liquid, leading to it entering their lungs instead of their stomach. This can cause a chest infection that may lead to aspiration pneumonia which can be deadly.

### *Suffocation*

Self-feeding pillows may increase the risk of smothering the baby's face, leading to suffocation.

### *Ear infections*

Baby bottle self-feeding devices may increase the risk of ear infections. This occurs when a baby feeds on their back. The milk and bacteria can pool at the back of their mouth which is connected to the ear. Ear infections can lead to long term damage and an increased risk of hearing or speech problems.

### **Urgent advice to consumers**

If you have purchased or own a baby bottle self-feeding device, you should:

- immediately stop using it, and
- dispose of it safely so that it cannot be used by anyone else.

Always follow government safe baby feeding advice to never [prop up a bottle](#) and never [leave an infant to feed unsupervised](#).

### **Urgent advice to suppliers**

Sellers are strongly encouraged to immediately cease supply of these devices.

Suppliers are advised to conduct a risk assessment of these products and take any action necessary to address any safety issue, which could include initiating a voluntary product safety recall and notifying the ACCC via the online form on the [ACCC website](#).

Dated this **5th** day of August 2024

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Jones', is positioned above the printed name.

The Hon Stephen Jones MP  
Assistant Treasurer