

Study shows quality is king in China's infant formula market

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Chinese parents care much more about the quality and nutritional value of infant formula than its price, new research by Advanced Lipids has shown.

China accounts for almost half of all infant formula sales globally. To gain new market insights, Advanced Lipids, manufacturer of the fat ingredient INFAT®, surveyed 211 urban Chinese parents.

All fed their children with infant formula, either exclusively or in combination with breastfeeding. Nearly three in five (59%) named nutritional value as one of the two factors most important to them when choosing formula, while 45% chose quality and 39% chose safety. Only six per cent said price was an important factor.

The survey shows that many Chinese parents are prepared to shop around to find high-quality products. Eight in ten (80%) of the respondents (all of whom lived in major cities and had a joint income above the national average) said they had tried at least two different formulas, with 38% trying at least three.

The most common reasons for switching products were that another formula offered higher quality (75%) and concerns about safety (74%). By far the most common source of information was the internet: 71% of parents searched online before deciding on a product, compared to 49% who consulted friends and 27% who sought the advice of a doctor.

The parents were much more likely to prefer to buy formula products manufactured overseas than in China (82% v 18%). However, country of origin was not a significant driver of product choice, with only 2% of respondents considering it one of the most important factors when choosing a formula.

Advanced Lipids is the manufacturer of INFAT®, a high-quality fat ingredient for formula. INFAT® contains high levels of the structured triglyceride SN-2 palmitate (also known as OPO) and mimics the structure of human milk fat, providing a range of health benefits for infants.