



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

May 16, 2022

Dear Health Care Provider,

North Carolina families are navigating infant formula shortages and are often turning to you for help. Here are suggestions for how to help families.

Encourage Families To Take These Actions

Formula supplies

- Families and clinics can contact manufacturers for help in finding formula
 - [MyGerber Baby Expert](#)
 - Abbott's Consumer Hotline: call 1-800-986-8540 and urgent [product request line](#)
 - Reckitt's (Mead Johnson) Customer Service line: call 1-800 BABY-123 (222-9123)
- If a family is unable to find their preferred cow's milk-based formula, a comparable other brand, including generic or store brand, smaller manufacturer, or organic options are generally fine. See a table of substitute formula options below.
- Families needing help with formula costs who have not applied for assistance are encouraged to learn more about WIC at <https://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/> or apply for FNS (formerly known as food stamps) at <https://epass.nc.gov>
- If you see a formula price that seems too high, report it to the North Carolina Department of Justice by filing a complaint at <https://ncdoj.gov/gouging> or by calling 1-877-5-NO-SCAM.
- **For Providers Writing WIC Prescriptions:** Consider the following instead for Provider guidance. You may list multiple formula options (i.e., formula equivalencies) on a single prescription. The WIC agency will work with families to accommodate multiple option prescriptions for specialized formula.

Breastfeeding

- Women who are pregnant are encouraged to consult with a health care provider about breastfeeding their infant.
- If the family is using both breastmilk and formula, encourage an appointment with your local lactation specialist to try and help increase their supply of breastmilk.
- If the parent recently breastfed then stopped, they may be able to induce re-lactation for some volume of breastmilk. Your local lactation specialist would be happy to discuss further with them.
- If they have the means, families can purchase human donor milk from the WakeMed Mother's Milk Bank, through partnerships with the Triangle Compounding Pharmacy in Cary and 501 Pharmacy in Chapel Hill. The out-patient price is \$110 for 500mL which is the minimum volume that can be ordered; the price decreases slightly as volume request increases. A prescription is required and can be found [here](#).
- Informal breastmilk sharing is an option if the family has a trusted source with excess available breastmilk to donate. This breastmilk will not be pasteurized and tested like human donor milk from the Milk Bank. Purchasing breastmilk from an unknown source on the internet is NOT recommended.

Alternative feeding

- If the infant is over 4 months old and can hold their head up well in a highchair, parents can start to introduce thin purees. Parents may also consider introducing meats, legumes (lentils, beans), egg yolks, avocado, banana, or other foods that have been pureed or mashed and mixed with water, formula, or breastmilk. The amount of solids taken at this age will not decrease their needs for breastmilk or formula by a lot, but it might help some.
- If the infant is close to 12 months old, parents can begin a transition from formula to whole cow's milk or use toddler formula temporarily. AAP counsels that families can feed infants older than 6 months cow's milk for a brief [period](#) of time until the shortage is better. Although not ideal and should not become routine, it is a better option than diluting formula or making homemade formula. Although there are no well established recommendations on volume, follow the limits that infants 6-12 months should drink no more than 24 ounces a day. In this situation, it is important to ensure the infant is getting enough iron to prevent [anemia](#). Counsel families on iron-containing solid foods in their diet or consider prescribing an iron supplement.

Counsel Families On Dangerous Practices to Avoid

- Do **NOT** make homemade infant formula. Homemade formula recipes can be very dangerous for babies since they have not been evaluated by the FDA and may lack nutrients vital to an infant's growth.
- Do **NOT** water down formula to stretch it out; it is not safe to do so. Always follow formula label instructions or those given to you by your health care provider.
- Do **NOT** buy formula from online auctions, unknown individuals, or unknown origins. Storage and shipping conditions may impact formula safety. Formula from outside the United States is not regulated by the FDA, though the FDA is now exploring safe options for importing formula from other countries.
- Do **NOT** purchase breastmilk from an unknown source on the internet.

What NCDHHS is Doing To Help

- Sharing information with families and consumers through news outlets and social media. Updated information is available at www.nutritionnc.com/wic
- Through the WIC program, NCDHHS is helping to connect families directly to needed formula and placing bulk orders with manufacturers on behalf of local WIC agencies and the families they serve.
- Working with local, state, and federal partners to closely monitor formula supply and to keep local WIC agencies and partners updated.
- Working with the federal government to waive certain rules for the WIC program to make it easier for WIC participants to access available formula. North Carolina already has flexibilities that help retailers continue to serve WIC-enrolled families during the shortage and help families exchange formulas included in the recall. Additional requested flexibilities would give WIC-enrolled families more flexibility to purchase other types of formula and in a wider variety of sizes based on availability and health care provider recommendations.

Infant Formula Substitutes

Indications	Abbott Laboratories	Mead Johnson	Gerber	Store Brand (Perrigo)	Nutricia
Standard	Similac® 360 Total Care, Similac® Pro-Advance, Similac® Advance	Enfamil NeuroPro™ Infant, Enfamil Enspire, Enfamil NeuroPro™ Infant, Enfamil Infant	Good Start, GentlePro	Parent's Choice Advantage or Infant, Up&Up Advantage, Member's Mark Advantage, Mama Bear Advantage, Little Journey Advantage, CVS Advantage, Well Beginnings Advantage, Comforts (Kroger), Kirkland Signature ProCare	
	Similac® Organic	Enfamil Simply Organic		Earth's Best Organic	
Mild Digestive Issues	Similac® 360 Total Care Sensitive, Similac® Pro-Sensitive, Similac® Sensitive	Enfamil NeuroPro™ Gentlease, Enfamil NeuroPro Sensitive	Good Start, SoothePro	Parent's Choice Sensitivity, Up&Up Sensitivity, Member's Mark Sensitivity, Mama Bear Sensitivity, Little Journey Sensitivity, CVS Sensitivity	
	Similac® Pro-Total Comfort, Similac® Total Comfort	Enfamil NeuroPro™ Gentlease, Enfamil Gentlease	Good Start, SoothePro	Parent's Choice Complete Comfort, Up&Up Complete Comfort, CVS Complete Comfort	
		Enfamil Reguline	Good Start or GentlePro	Burt's Bees Baby Ultra Gentle Organic, Parent's Choice Tender	
	Similac® For Spit Up	Enfamil AR	Good Start, Gentle Supreme	Parent's Choice Added Rice Starch, Up&Up Added Rice Starch	
	Similac® Soy Isomil	Enfamil Prosobee	Gentle Soy	Parent's Choice Soy, Up&Up Soy, Comforts Soy (Kroger)	

Allergies	Similac® Alimentum	Nutramigen or Pregestimil	Extensive-HA	Parent's Choice Hypoallergenic, Up&Up Hypoallergenic, CVS Health Hypoallergenic, Mama Bear Hypoallergenic	
	EleCare	PurAmino	Alfamino		Neocate Infant, Neocate Syneo
	EleCare Jr Unflavored	PurAmino Jr Unflavored	Alfamino Jr.		Neocate Jr., Neocate Splash
Prematurity	Similac® Neosure - 22 Cal	Enfamil NeuroPro™ EnfaCare - 22 Cal			
		Enfamil NeuroPro™ EnfaCare - 22 Cal			
	Similac® Special Care - 20 Cal	Enfamil Premature - 20 Cal			
	Similac® Special Care - 24 Cal	Enfamil Premature - 24 Cal			
	Similac® Special Care High Protein - 24 Cal	Enfamil Premature High Protein - 24 Cal			
	Similac® Special Care - 30 Cal	Enfamil Premature - 30 Cal			
	Similac® NeoSure	Enfamil NeuroPro EnfaCare			
Special dietary needs	Ketonex® -1	BCAD 1			
	Ketonex® -2	BCAD 2			
	Glutarex® -1 or Glutarex® -2	GA			
	Hominex® -1	HCY 1			

	Hominex® -2	HCY 2			
	I-Valex® -1 or I-Valex® -2	LMD			
	Propimex® -1	OA 1			
	Propimex® -2	OA 2			
	Phenex® -1	Phenyl®-Free 1			
	Phenex® -2	Phenyl®-Free 2			
		Phenyl®-Free HP			
	Pro-Phree®	PFD Toddler			
		PFD 2			
	Tyrex® -1	TYROS 1			
	Tyrex® -2	TYROS 2			
	Cyclinex® -1	WND® 1			
	Cyclinex® -2	WND® 2			

Sources:

<https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-baby-formula/#more-baby-formulas-to-consider>

<https://www.storebrandformula.com/abbottrecall/images/Formula-Alternatives.pdf>

Store Brands: Parent's Choice – Walmart, Member's Mark – Sam's Club, Up&Up – Target, Comforts – Kroger, Kirkland – Costco, Mama Bear – Amazon, Little Journey – Aldo, Well beginnings - Walgreens

Other Resources

- [HHS: Helping Families Find Formula](#)
- [President Biden's Fact Sheet](#)
- [AAP/Healthychildren.org Resource for Parents](#)
- [FDA Consumer Page on Powdered Infant Formula Recall](#)
- [USDA Infant Formula Safety](#)
- [FDA Infant Formula: Safety Do's and Don'ts](#)
- [USDA WIC Breastfeeding](#)
- [CDC's Relactation Resources](#)
- [WHO/UNICEF's Maximising Breastmilk and Supporting Re-lactation](#)
- [Ready, Set, Baby](#)
- [Establishing and Making Enough Milk](#)
- [Ready, Set, Baby Live Online Classes Schedule](#)
- [NC WIC Store Finder](#)