



NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

June 15, 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.

Formula supplies

- Families are encouraged to purchase only the formula they need for the next two weeks to help ease shortages.
- Families and clinics can contact manufacturers for help in finding formula
 - [MyGerber Baby Expert](#)
 - Abbott's Customer Service: 1-877-4Abbott or 1-800-986-8540 (recall specific information)
 - Abbott's [product request line and form](#) for metabolic formulas
 - Abbott is making limited quantities of EleCare available for those in urgent need. Health care providers can [submit a request online](#).
 - 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. NCDHHS has also developed a [flyer](#) to help families understand the variety of options available for standard milk-based and soy-based formulas.
- More specialty formula is being imported through Operation Fly Formula. This formula is being distributed through usual channels to stores, online retailers, health care providers and distributors, so families and health systems do not need to make special requests for these imported formulas.
- The FDA is easing some regulations to support the import of additional brands and types of formulas from overseas. Families can follow the updates on [FDA's website](#). The FDA has also shared tips for [preparing imported infant formula](#).
- Families participating in WIC now also have [additional formula options](#) during the formula shortage. The North Carolina WIC Program is issuing benefits for more sizes of Gerber formula and two additional Gerber formula products. These changes will help families buy the formula that is available in stores throughout the shortage.
- 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 Food and Nutrition Services (formerly known as food stamps) at <https://epass.nc.gov>. FNS benefits can be used to purchase infant formula.
- 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. Spanish speakers can call (919) 716-0058 to report price gouging.

Breastfeeding

- Especially during the shortage, providers should encourage expectant parents to consider breastfeeding. NCDHHS has created [family-facing resources to educate about breastfeeding](#). A [Spanish version](#) is also available. Encourage them to work with their insurer to obtain a breast pump and lactation support, if desired.
- If the family is using both breastmilk and formula, assist families with making an appointment with a [local lactation specialist](#) to try and help increase their supply of breastmilk. These visits are covered by Medicaid.
- Help families get a breast pump. [This summary document](#) can help families covered by Medicaid or participating in WIC navigate accessing a breast pump as well as additional breastfeeding supports. A Spanish version is also available.
- If the parent recently breastfed then stopped, they may be able to induce re-lactation for some volume of breastmilk with support. A local lactation specialist can discuss further with the parent. NCDHHS has a [resource on increasing milk supply](#) that can be helpful with families. It is also available in [Spanish](#).
- 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 no more than a week during the shortage. 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 iron-containing solid foods in their diet or consider prescribing an iron supplement.
- In urgent situations during the shortage, [AAP and the federal Department of Health and Human Services](#) have similar recommendations regarding careful short-term use of soy milk and toddler drinks. Families should be counseled by a health care provider before beginning these feedings and the specific health and history of the infant should be considered.

Specialty formulas

- NC WIC can directly order some specialty formulas from manufacturers for available products. Providers can direct or assist families in working with their [local WIC agency](#) to place these orders.
- For infants relying on a specialty Abbott formula produced in the plant that was closed, Abbott is making these formulas available for life-threatening conditions on case-by-case basis. Providers can contact Abbott's hotline at 1-800-881-0876 or send a [request form online](#). If any family or provider in the state is having trouble accessing a specialty Abbott formula after calling the manufacturer hotline, please contact the FDA at 404-253-1169.
- Abbott is also making limited quantities of EleCare and EleCare Jr. available for those in urgent need. To order product for an infant or child in urgent medical need, the healthcare provider needs to:
 1. Download the form at www.abbottnutrition.com/elecare
 2. Fill the form out to provide the patient information, attesting that the patient is in urgent need of the product. One form per patient.
 3. Fax the form to 1-877-293-9145 or email the form to elecareorders@abbott.com.
- **For Providers Writing WIC Prescriptions for Specialty Formula:** The WIC agency is working with families to accommodate multiple option prescriptions for specialized formula. Please consider listing multiple specialty formula options (i.e., formula equivalencies) on a single [WIC Medical Documentation Form](#) or equivalent to make it easier for the family. See the example below:

Please complete all sections (A-D) for all prescriptions.

A. PARTICIPANT INFORMATION

Participant's name:	DOB:
Medical condition(s) indicating need for prescribed product: milk and soy protein allergy	

B. FORMULA/PRODUCT

Formula/product prescribed: Nutramigen w/ Enflora LGG, Alimentum, Gerber HA

The screenshot shows a form with two main sections, A and B. Section A is titled 'PARTICIPANT INFORMATION' and contains two rows of input fields. The first row has 'Participant's name:' and 'DOB:'. The second row has 'Medical condition(s) indicating need for prescribed product:' with the text 'milk and soy protein allergy' entered. Section B is titled 'FORMULA/PRODUCT' and contains one row with 'Formula/product prescribed:' and the text 'Nutramigen w/ Enflora LGG, Alimentum, Gerber HA' entered. A red oval is drawn around the entire section B area.

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.
- Do **NOT** purchase breastmilk from an unknown source on the internet.
- Do **NOT** give babies goat's milk.

What NCDHHS is Doing To Help

- Sharing information and resources at www.ncdhhs.gov/formula.
- Monitoring the fluctuating formula supply across the state and updating partner organizations.
- Connecting families participating in WIC directly to needed formula and placing bulk orders with manufacturers on behalf of local WIC agencies and the families they serve.
- Making it easier for WIC participants to access available formula by increasing the types and sizes of formula eligible for purchase with WIC benefits.
- Making it easier for health care providers to give WIC-enrolled families several options of formula types and sizes on a single prescription to meet their children's specialized formula needs.
- Using available USDA waivers to help retailers continue to serve WIC-enrolled families during the shortage and help families return or exchange formulas included in the recall.
- Clarifying how those covered by Medicaid can access breast pumps and breastfeeding supports and making it easier for families to navigate those processes.

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](#)

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 Infant	Good Start, GentlePro	Parent's Choice Advantage or Infant, Up & Up Advantage, Member's Mark Advantage, Mama Bear Advantage, Little Journey Advantage, CVS Health 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 Health Sensitivity, Well Beginnings Gentle	
	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 Health Complete Comfort	
		Enfamil Reguline	Good Start Gentle 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, Well Beginnings Soy	
	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			
	Ketonex® -1	BCAD 1			
	Ketonex® -2	BCAD 2			

Special dietary needs	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 – Aldi, Well beginnings - Walgreens