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](https://www.gerber.com/mygerberbabyexperts)
  - Abbott’s Customer Service: 1-877-4Abbott or 1-800-986-8540 (recall specific information)
  - Abbott’s [product request line and form](https://www.gerber.com) for metabolic formulas
  - 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](https://www.ncdhhs.gov) 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 or 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](https://www.fda.gov). Kendamil is one of the first brands expected to import formula with several standard formula types expected to hit store shelves in June. Kendamil has set up a [website for families to receive updates](https://www.kendamilusa.com).
- 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/](https://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/) or apply for Food and Nutrition Services (formerly known as food stamps) at [https://epass.nc.gov](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](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, 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.
• If the parent recently breastfed then stopped, they may be able to induce re-lactation for some volume of breastmilk. A local lactation specialist can discuss further with the parent.
• 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.

**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](http://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.
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, resources and recommendations with families and health care providers at www.ncdhhs.gov/formula.
- Monitoring the fluctuating formula supply across the state and keeping our partner organizations updated.
- Through the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), 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.
- 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.
- Working with the federal government to waive additional rules for the WIC program to make it easier for WIC participants to access available formula.
- Providing guidance to local WIC agencies and health care providers to make 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.

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indications</th>
<th>Abbott Laboratories</th>
<th>Mead Johnson</th>
<th>Gerber</th>
<th>Store Brand (Perrigo)</th>
<th>Nutricia</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Standard</strong></td>
<td>Similac® 360 Total Care, Similac® Pro-Advance, Similac® Advance</td>
<td>Enfamil NeuroPro™ Infant, Enfamil Enspire, Enfamil Infant</td>
<td>Good Start, GentlePro</td>
<td>Parent’s Choice Advantage or Infant, Up &amp; Up Advantage, Member’s Mark Advantage, Mama Bear Advantage, Little Journey Advantage, CVS Health Advantage, Well Beginnings Advantage, Comforts (Kroger), Kirkland Signature ProCare</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Similac® Organic</td>
<td>Enfamil Simply Organic</td>
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<td>Earth’s Best Organic</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>Enfamil Reguline</td>
<td>Good Start Gentle or GentlePro</td>
<td>Burt’s Bees Baby Ultra Gentle Organic, Parent’s Choice Tender</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Similac® For Spit Up</td>
<td>Enfamil AR</td>
<td>Good Start, Gentle Supreme</td>
<td>Parent’s Choice Added Rice Starch, Up &amp; Up Added Rice Starch</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Similac® Soy Isomil</td>
<td>Enfamil Prosobee</td>
<td>Gentle Soy</td>
<td>Parent’s Choice Soy, Up &amp; Up Soy, Comforts Soy (Kroger)</td>
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<td><strong>Allergies</strong></td>
<td>Similac® Alimentum</td>
<td>Nutramigen or Pregestimil</td>
<td>Extensive-HA</td>
<td>Parent’s Choice Hypoallergenic, Up &amp; Up Hypoallergenic, CVS Health Hypoallergenic, Mama Bear Hypoallergenic, Well Beginnings Soy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>EleCare</td>
<td>PurAmino</td>
<td>Alfamino</td>
<td>Neocate Infant, Neocate Syneo</td>
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<td><strong>Prematurity</strong></td>
<td>Similac® Neosure - 22 Cal</td>
<td>Enfamil NeuroPro™ EnfaCare - 22 Cal</td>
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<td>Similac® Special Care - 20 Cal</td>
<td>Enfamil Premature - 20 Cal</td>
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<td>Similac® Special Care High Protein - 24 Cal</td>
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<td>Similac® Special Care - 30 Cal</td>
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<td>Ketonex® -1</td>
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<td>Ketonex® -2</td>
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<td>Special dietary needs</td>
<td>Glutarex® -1 or Glutarex® -2</td>
<td>Hominex® -1</td>
<td>Hominex® -2</td>
<td>I-Valex® -1 or I-Valex® -2</td>
<td>Propimex® -1</td>
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<td>LMD</td>
<td>OA 1</td>
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Sources:
https://www.nytimes.com/wirecutter/reviews/best-baby-formula/#more-baby-formulas-to-consider

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