



# Infant Formula Resources

November 2022

NCDHHS works in partnership with parents, caregivers, medical providers and WIC agencies to ensure safe and nutritious options for North Carolina families to feed infants. We have developed resources to support you and your baby.

## What can families do if they have trouble finding formula?

- Most families have multiple safe options for their infants, even if their usual formula is not in stock. For standard milk-based or soy-based formula, a comparable other brand, including generic or store brand, smaller manufacturer, or organic options are generally fine. NCDHHS has created and distributed a [flyer](#) to help families understand their formula options. If a family is using specialty formula and not able to find formula for their child, they should work with the child's health care provider to determine the best feeding plan.
- Families can turn to community organizations, reputable online retailers, distributors, and manufacturers as sources for finding formula. Contact [United Way's 2-1-1](#) or dial 2-1-1 to be connected to a community resource specialist who may be able to help you identify food pantries and other charitable sources of local infant formula.
- Pasteurized donor breastmilk from a [certified human milk bank](#) could be an option if you have the means and availability to purchase. Only purchase breastmilk from a certified human milk bank. Breastmilk purchased from other sources is NOT safe. [Find an HMBANA-accredited milk bank near you.](#)
- Families 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)
- The federal government has made changes to allow more infant formula from other countries to be sold in the United States. Families can follow the updates on [FDA's website](#). The FDA has also shared tips for [preparing imported infant formula](#).
- Families using a combination feeding of breast milk and iron-fortified infant formula may wish to consider increasing the frequency of breastfeeding or pumping if possible so that they do not need as much formula. Families can reach out to a [local lactation specialist](#) to try and help increase their supply of breastmilk.
- Women who are pregnant are encouraged to consult with a health care provider about breastfeeding. Families feeding a baby with donor breast milk should only purchase milk from a source that has screened its milk donors and taken other precautions to ensure the safety of its milk, such as those accredited by the [Human Milk Banking Association of North America](#).
- 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 (FNS, formerly known as food stamps) at <https://epass.nc.gov>. FNS benefits can be used to purchase infant formula.

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[WIC](#) is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children that provides benefits for healthy foods, breastfeeding education and support, and health care referrals for low-income families. Families participating in WIC can get the latest information on formula resources on [WIC's website](#).

WIC participants who cannot find formula in local stores should first contact their [local WIC agency](#) to get help finding available formula in the community. If formula is not available in local stores, the local WIC agency may be able to submit an order request for the formula from the manufacturer through the state WIC agency, pending availability.

For WIC participants with a specialized formula prescription, a medical provider must change the prescription. Talk with your child's health care provider about possible options during the shortage. In addition, local WIC agencies can help doctors and families with formula prescriptions that give families more options.

The WIC program also provides breastfeeding support and resources to families. Families participating in WIC may contact their local WIC clinic for additional breastfeeding support and breast pump issuance as appropriate.

## What should families avoid?

- Do **NOT** make homemade infant formula. A baby's nutritional needs are very specific, especially in the first year of life. Homemade formula may contain too little or too much of certain vitamins and minerals, like iron.
- Do **NOT** water down formula to stretch it out; it can be extremely dangerous to your baby 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.
- Do **NOT** use formula past the "best by" or "use by" date. The formula may not be safe and may have lost some of its nutrients.
- Toddler formula and plant-based milk alternatives are not recommended before a child's first birthday.

## Where can breastfeeding families and expectant families find resources?

- [USDA WIC Breastfeeding](#)
- [NCDHHS Breastfeeding Promotion and Support](#)
- [Ready, Set, Baby](#)
- [Establishing and Making Enough Milk](#)
- [Ready, Set, Baby Live Online Classes Schedule](#)

## What other resources are available?

- [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](#)
- [NCDHHS WIC Program](#)
- [CDC's Relactation Resources](#)
- [WHO/UNICEF's Maximising Breastmilk and Supporting Re-lactation](#)
- [NC WIC Store Finder](#)



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