



OFFICE OF FAMILIES AND CHILDREN
Families and Children Letter FCL #028

To: Private and Public Agency Directors, IV-E Court Administrators

From: Jeffery Van Deusen, Deputy Director
Office of Families and Children

Date: May 20, 2022

Subject: Infant Formula Shortage Guidance

Background

As a result of national supply chain issues and a factory recall, the United States is facing a national infant formula shortage. This letter provides resources to agencies who may be having difficulty locating infant formula.

Resources and Guidance

The United States Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has issued a Fact Sheet to address the shortage which can be found at the following link: [Fact Sheet: Helping Families Find Formula During the Infant Formula Shortage | HHS.gov](#). In addition, they have issued the following key messages:

- Never dilute formula. Diluting infant formula with water or other liquids can be dangerous and even life-threatening for babies, leading to a serious nutritional deficit and health issues.
- Avoid homemade formula: Homemade formulas often lack or have inadequate amounts of critical nutrients.
- Use of substitute formulas is acceptable: For most babies, if their regular brand of formula is not currently available, it is acceptable to substitute with a similar version. If families have questions about which formula is acceptable, or if they are still having difficulty finding formula, they should contact their child's pediatric provider or WIC clinic.
- Talk to your doctor: Families should consult their pediatrician if their babies or children require a specialized formula and need a recommendation for a comparable formula to use.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has provided the following recommendations, in addition to those provided by HHS, for caregivers who need assistance with meeting infant formula needs:

- Do not give your infant or child juice, milk, or water in place of formula.
- Call the store to ask about product availability.
- If you do not see the formula you need on the shelf, consider kindly asking a store associate for assistance.
- Consider talking to the pharmacy to ask for help if your child is on a specialized formula about adjusting their prescription to an appropriate alternative formula.
- Those participating in WIC may contact their local WIC office for assistance.

ODH has also provided the following formula purchasing tips:

- Call the store first and ask for product availability.
- When at the store, ask a store associate if there is more formula in the back if there is not any on the shelf. Consider asking a second associate if the first one is unsure.
- Ask when the next shipment is expected to arrive.
- Ask when shelves are usually stocked.
- Use WIC benefits in the middle two weeks of the month to avoid times when the store supply tends to be especially low. Note: this may be helpful at some stores but not all.
- Talk to your store pharmacy to see if they can help. Your WIC office may also have a list of additional pharmacies where certain WIC benefits can be redeemed.
- If you worked with your WIC office and still cannot find your formula, consider going to a non-WIC store to purchase formula with your SNAP or TANF benefits, or family funds as able.

Nationwide Children's Hospital has developed a list of recommendations as well as a formula crosswalk to assist caregivers in choosing alternative infant formula when the regularly used brand is unavailable. More information is located at the following link: [Formula Shortage: What Parents Can Do \(nationwidechildrens.org\)](https://www.nationwidechildrens.org/formula-shortage-what-parents-can-do).

Caregivers may also wish to reach out to the manufacturers of their normal brand of infant formula for assistance. Contact information for manufacturers is included below:

30 East Broad Street
Columbus, OH 43215
jfs.ohio.gov

- **Gerber's MyGerber Baby Expert:** (<https://www.gerber.com/mygerber-baby-expert>): reach a certified nutrition or lactation consultant by phone, text, Facebook Messenger, web chat, or video call, who can help you identify a similar formula that may be more readily available
- **Abbott's Consumer Hotline:** 1-800-986-8540
- **Abbott's urgent product request line** (<https://abbottnutrition.com/metabolics>): ask your OBGYN or your infant's pediatrician to submit an urgent product request by downloading and completing the following form: (https://static.abbottnutrition.com/cms-prod/abbottnutrition-2016.com/img/22-PSN-C_Print-Metabolics_Urgent_Product_RequestForm_FA04a.pdf)
- **Reckitt's Customer Service line:** 1-800 BABY-123 (222-9123)

OFC recommends that the above information and resources are provided to families seeking assistance during this time. It is also recommended that the information be made available to all families served by the agency. Additionally, OFC continues to be in contact with ODH regarding any updated information and resources. If there are updates, additional communication will be forwarded.

Questions

If you have further questions, please contact Rebekah Murray at Rebekah.Murray@jfs.ohio.gov.