



Answering your questions about the baby formula shortage

In February 2022, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) warned that some powdered infant formulas may have been contaminated with bacteria. Those formulas have been removed from shelves and are no longer being sold. Now, due to increased need for other formulas and supply chain issues, there is a nationwide formula shortage.

Most families use infant formula in some way. The formula shortage has created anxiety for parents who are trying to feed and care for their babies. The FDA and several formula companies are taking steps to help with the supply of formula.

Here at CHOC, we offer direction for handling the decrease in infant formula. Please note that these suggestions should not replace the advice of your pediatrician.

Tips for formula use during a formula shortage

- Talk to your pediatrician about the best substitute if you cannot find your formula.
- Check all local options like smaller drug stores, churches, or food pantries.
- Stock up on a few extra cans if you find your formula. Please do not buy more than you need; leave some for other families who need it too.
- Reach out to your local California Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. If you receive WIC, contact the WIC offices. They may be able to get formula or formula substitutes for you.
- Consider buying formula online. Be sure to only buy from well-recognized companies or pharmacies. Do not buy it from individually sold or auction sites. If the formula is not stored or shipped correctly, it could be unsafe to use.
- Do not make or feed homemade infant formulas to infants. Homemade formulas might have too many or not enough ingredients necessary for health and growth. This can lead to health problems for you baby and could even lead to death.
- Do not water down infant formula to make it last longer. Putting too much water in your child's formula will not provide your baby with enough nutrition, which can cause serious health problems.
- Do not use toddler formulas, cow's milk, goat's milk or plant-based milk as substitutes for infant formula. They do not have the right balance of protein and nutrients for children under 1 year. Using them can lead to health problems for your child.
- If you buy formula from outside of the U.S. make sure it is FDA-approved. Without FDA approval, formulas from outside of the U.S. might have too much or not enough of some important ingredients.

Apart from those infants who need specialty formulas for medical reasons, most babies are okay to switch to a generic infant formula that may be easier to find—including store brand ones.

CHOC understands this can be a scary time for families who are trying to get the formulas they need. As of May 2022, CHOC's clinical nutrition and lactation teams suggest the following substitutions for recalled formulas:



Recalled Formula	Substitution
Standard Infant Formula (Intact Protein) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac Pro Advance Powder • Similac Total Care 360 Powder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enfamil Newborn, Infant or Reguline • Similac Organic • Parent's Choice Organic (Walmart) • Gerber Good Start Gentle • Earth's Best Gentle • Bobbi (as of 5/17, temporarily not accepting new customers) • Byheart infant formula • *Gerber Good Start Soy • *Similac Isomil (Soy) • *Mead Johnson Prosobee (Soy) • *Parent's Choice Soy (Walmart)
Infant Formula for Spit up (Intact Protein) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac Spit Up Powder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac for Spit-up Ready to Feed Liquid • Mead Johnson Enfamil A.R. • Parent's Choice Added Rice
Infant formula for lactose intolerance, fussiness, colic (Intact Protein and Partially hydrolyzed Protein Options) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac Sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac Sensitive Ready to Feed Liquid or Concentrate liquid • Mead Johnson Enfamil Gentlease • Up & Up Gentle (Target) • Up & Up Sensitivity (Target) • Gerber Good Start Soothe • Earth's Best Sensitive • *Gerber Good Start Soy • *Similac Isomil Soy • *Mead Johnson Prosobee Soy • *Parent's Choice Soy (Walmart)
Infant Formula for gastrointestinal (GI) sensitives, low lactose (Extensively Hydrolyzed) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac Total Comfort Powder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac Total Comfort Ready to Feed Liquid • Gerber Good Start Gentle • Parent's Choice Complete Comfort (Walmart)
Hypoallergenic, Extensively Hydrolyzed Infant Formula for gastrointestinal (GI) sensitives <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac Alimentum Powder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Similac Alimentum Ready to Feed Liquid • Mead Johnson Nutramigen concentrate and powder • Gerber Good Start Extensive HA • Parent's Choice Hypoallergenic (Walmart) • Up & Up Hypoallergenic (Target)
Hypoallergenic, Amino Acid Based Infant Formula <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elecare Infant 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neocate Infant • Neocate Syneo (NOT for use in kids with short bowel syndrome) • Mead Johnson Puramino DHA & ARA Infant • Nestle Alfamino Infant
Hypoallergenic, Amino Acid Based Pediatric Formula for Ages 1 and up <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elecare Junior – All Flavors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neocate Junior • Neocate Syneo (NOT for use in kids with short bowel syndrome) • Mead Johnson Puramino Junior • Nestle Alfamino Junior

*NOT INDICATED FOR PRETERM INFANTS

Store Brand Infant Formulas are available from Retailers Nationwide: Walmart (Parent's Choice), Sam's Club (Member's Mark), Target (Up& Up), Kroger (Comforts), Costco (Kirkland Signature), Amazon (Mama Bear), CVS (CVS health), Aldi (Little Journey), Walgreens (Well Beginnings)