



Health Alert Network Message 22-19: Updated Office of Public Health Recommendations Regarding the Nationwide Infant Formula Shortage

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Revision Dates (List All Revision Dates):

Updated Office of Public Health Recommendations Regarding the Nationwide Infant Formula Shortage

Families are reporting difficulty finding infant formula in stores throughout the state. Formula manufacturers have said this is due to supply chain issues and a [recall](#) of Similac Advance, Spit-Up, Total Comfort, Sensitive, PM 60/40, Alimentum and Elecare products after four babies developed bacterial infections after consuming formula. The infections did not occur in Louisiana. The shortage is affecting families across the country, including Louisiana.

Key points:

- Since the Abbott formula recall was announced, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (LA WIC) has added 89 substitute formula products to its existing approved product list to increase access to safe formula products for WIC families.
- This expansion includes more name and store brands, types (powder, liquid concentrate, and ready to feed), and product/unit sizes to the LA WIC approved food list.
- WIC participants are issued specific food benefits on an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card.
- There are approximately 435 [WIC-authorized grocery stores](#) throughout the state where WIC participants can redeem their EBT benefits.
- WIC participants may need to return to their WIC clinic to get their EBT benefits updated if they are having trouble finding a substitute at the grocery store.
- More information about the LA WIC Program, including clinic locations, can be found on the program website: LouisianaWIC.org.

LDH is suggesting the following tips for families who are dealing with the infant formula shortage:

- For most babies, it is OK to switch between standard formula brands including generic store brands. For specialized formulas, talk with your pediatrician.
- Don't hoard: the American Academy of Pediatrics recommends buying no more than a 10-day to two-week supply for formula.
- Food pantries, charitable organizations, and local formula representatives may also be able to help. WIC clinics can help connect families to local food banks.
- Check smaller stores and drug stores and not just the big stores.
- Use store websites to search for formula products before you go to the store, and use the pickup option if it is available. If you can, buy formula online from well-recognized retailers or pharmacies.

- Louisiana SNAP is [accepted](#) at the following retailers: Amazon, Walmart, Sam's Club Scan and Go, Sprouts Farmers Market. For infants/children on WIC, visit the Louisiana WIC [website](#) for available substitutions. If you are using your WIC EBT card to purchase formula, you can find WIC-approved grocery stores [here](#).
- Never water down formula to stretch it out – this can lead to babies not getting the nutrition they need.
- Never make homemade baby formula. This is not safe and the formula does not meet a baby's nutritional needs.
- Cow's milk, goat's milk, and plant-based milk are not recommended substitutions for breast milk or infant formula. These can be low in protein and minerals and babies' digestive systems will not be able to tolerate them. Infants should not be fed plant-based milk until 1 year of age and whole milk or goat's milk until approximately 11 months of age.
- Most healthy, full-term infants can start solid foods at 6 months of age. Consult with a pediatric dietitian, a pediatrician or a WIC dietitian about adding age-appropriate solids to an infant's diet if they are older than 6 months of age. Unless an infant has allergies or feeding issues, most healthy, full-term infants can start yogurt and/or cheese (made from whole milk) at 9 months of age.
- When switching to appropriate formula substitutes, give your baby time to adjust to a new formula. It is normal for babies to be fussy or gassy at first.
- Check formula cans for expiration dates and dents or punctures. Do not purchase the formula if it is expired or if the can is damaged.
- If you want to feed your baby donor breastmilk, go through a verified milk bank such as the Mother's Milk Bank of Louisiana. There is a critical supply shortage right now of donor milk. Informal milk sharing can come with health risks if you do not know the mother's full health history.
- If you are partially breastfeeding, work with a lactation consultant to increase your breastmilk supply so that you do not need to purchase as much infant formula.