



## How parents can keep their children safe and fed during the infant formula shortage 2022

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In February 2022, the U.S. Food & Drug Administration (FDA) issued a warning about certain powdered infant formulas which may have been contaminated with bacteria. Those formulas have since been recalled and removed from shelves. Now, due to increased demand for alternative formulas and industry-wide supply chain issues, there is a nationwide formula shortage.

With most families using infant formula in some capacity, this shortage has understandably created anxiety for parents who are trying to feed and care for their babies. Currently, the FDA and several formula companies are taking steps to improve the supply of formula.

Here, CHOC offers guidance for navigating the infant formula shortage. Please note that these guidelines should not replace the advice of your pediatrician.

### **Do not make or feed homemade formulas to your infants.**

The FDA and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) do not recommend that parents make or feed homemade infant formulas to infants. Homemade formulas might contain too many or not enough nutrients, which can cause severe electrolyte abnormalities; inadequate vitamin and mineral intake leading to nutrient deficiencies; and has the potential to lead to death.

### **Do not water down or dilute infant formula to “stretch” it out.**

Diluting or watering down formula will not provide your baby with enough nutrition, which can lead to serious health problems.

### **Speak with your pediatrician about formula substitutes.**

Your pediatrician may be able to direct you to formula substitutes or have knowledge of places that have any formula in stock. Do not use toddler formulas, cow's milk, goat's milk or plant-based milk alternatives as substitutes for infant formula.

Using these substitutes for infants under 1 year of age is not recommended as they lack the appropriate balance of protein and micronutrients, which can lead to health complications.

### **Reach out to your local California Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program.**

If you are a recipient, [WIC offices](#) may be able to obtain formula or formula substitutes for you.

## Check smaller drug stores, local churches or food pantries for formula.

Smaller drug stores may have a supply of formula available when larger stores are out. In addition, some charities may have previously-donated formulas that they may be able to provide you with.

## If you find formula at a store, stock up on a few cans.

If you can find somewhere that has your formula in stock, get a few extra to have on hand. However, please refrain from buying or hoarding more than you need; leave some for other families who need it.

## Consider buying formula online.

You may be able to find some formula options online. But be sure to only buy from well-recognized distributors or pharmacies rather than individually sold or auction sites. If the formula is not stored or shipped correctly, it could be unsafe to use.

If available, buy directly from the manufacturer's site.

## Make sure that any overseas formulas are FDA-approved.

In the past, it has been advised for families to avoid purchasing imported formulas from overseas because they are not FDA approved. Without FDA approval, imported formulas might have too much or not enough of some ingredients.

However, the U.S. government has announced that the FDA may streamline the process to approve more imported formulas to help the shortage. In this case, only use imported formulas have been approved by the FDA.

Apart from those infants who are on medically indicated or specialty formulas such as extensively hydrolyzed, amino acid-based, renal or metabolic formulas, most babies are okay to switch to a generic, more readily available infant formula — including store brand ones.

[Learn more about how the FDA is working to improve the supply of formula products.](#)

## CHOC Formula Recall Substitution List May 2022

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

Formula Category	Substitutions
<b>Standard Infant Formula (Intact Protein)</b>  Similac Pro Advance powder ( <i>Recalled Formula</i> ) Similac Total Care 360 powder ( <i>Recalled Formula</i> )	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 Prosoabee (Soy), *Parent's Choice Soy (Walmart)

<b>Infant Formula for Spit up (Intact Protein)</b> Similac Spit Up powder <i>(Recalled Formula)</i>	Similac for Spit up Ready to Feed Liquid Mead Johnson Enfamil A.R. Parent's Choice Added Rice
<b>Infant formula for lactose intolerance, fussiness, colic (Intact Protein and Partially hydrolyzed Protein Options)</b> Similac Sensitive <i>(Recalled Formula)</i>	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 Prosoabee (Soy), *Parent's Choice Soy (Walmart)
<b>Infant Formula for gastrointestinal (GI) sensitives, low lactose (Extensively Hydrolyzed)</b> Similac Total Comfort powder <i>(Recalled Formula)</i>	Similac Total Comfort Ready to Feed Liquid Gerber Good Start Gentle Parent's Choice Complete Comfort (Walmart)
<b>Hypoallergenic, Extensively Hydrolyzed Infant Formula for gastrointestinal (GI) sensitives</b> Similac Alimentum Powder <i>(Recalled Formula)</i>	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)
<b>Hypoallergenic, Amino Acid Based Infant Formula</b> Elecare Infant <i>(Recalled Formula)</i>	Neocate Infant Neocate Syneo (NOT for use in kids with Short Bowel Syndrome) Mead Johnson Puramino DHA & ARA Infant Nestle Alfamino Infant Gerber Good Start Extensive H.A.
<b>Hypoallergenic, Amino Acid Based Pediatric Formula for <u>Ages 1 and up</u></b> Elecare Junior All Flavors <i>(Recalled Formula)</i>	Neocate Infant Neocate Syneo (NOT for use in kids with Short Bowel Syndrome) Mead Johnson Puramino DHA & ARA Infant Nestle Alfamino Infant Gerber Good Start Extensive H.A.

\*NOT INDICATED FOR PRETERM INFANTS

## Store brand infant formulas

As mentioned in the substitutions list, most retailers nationwide offer their own brand of infant formula. No store-brand infant formulas are involved in the current recall.

The following store brand formulas may be suitable for substitutions:

- Parent's Choice - Walmart
- Member's Mark - Sam's Club
- Up & Up - Target
- Comforts - Kroger
- Kirkland Signature - Costco
- Mama Bear - Amazon
- CVS Health - CVS
- Little Journey - Aldi
- Well Beginnings - Walgreens

For infants on a specialty formula, it is especially important to speak with your pediatrician about formula changes and substitutes during this time.

This article is also published on CHOC's Health Blog:

<https://health.choc.org/how-to-help-your-infant-during-the-baby-formula-shortage/>