



# Baby Formula Shortage:

## What You Should Know



**Proper nutrition is important for babies under the age of 1. They need the correct balance of nutrients to maintain their growth and development.**

Breast milk is the best source of nutrition for infants. You can visit [UPMC.com/Health-Library/article?hwid=hw91687](https://www.upmc.com/Health-Library/article?hwid=hw91687) to learn more about the benefits of breast milk.

FDA approved infant formulas copy some nutritional benefits of breast milk. There is a current formula shortage due to challenges with getting ingredients, packaging, labor, and shipping. Adding to those challenges is a recall of formula.

No one knows how long the shortage will last, but many leaders are working to have formula available as soon as possible. Visit [healthychildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org) for more information from the American Academy of Pediatrics.

### When searching for formula:

- Use formula manufacturer's websites to see where formula is sold. Call them to see where their formula is available:
  - [Abbottnutrition.com/store-locator](https://www.abbottnutrition.com/store-locator)
  - [Enfamil.com/store-locator](https://www.enfamil.com/store-locator)
  - [Gerber.com/shop-by-product/formula](https://www.gerber.com/shop-by-product/formula)
- Contact your local WIC office, 211 (United Way), or food bank/SNAP:
  - [pawic.com](https://www.pawic.com)
  - [uwp.org/programs/2-1-1](https://www.uwp.org/programs/2-1-1)
  - [dhs.pa.gov/services/assistance/pages/SNAP.aspx](https://www.dhs.pa.gov/services/assistance/pages/SNAP.aspx)
- Check smaller stores and pharmacies for stock.
- Shop for formula online using well-recognized sites. Links to formula manufacturer's hotlines and additional community resources:
  - [hhs.gov/formula](https://www.hhs.gov/formula)
- Check social media groups dedicated to infant feedings and formula for recommendations on where to find formula. Always check with your pediatrician to discuss any advice provided by a social media group.
- Reach out to family/friends or parent groups to set up an exchange of unopened formula cans.



## Formula:

- Most formulas have the same basic ingredients. You can switch to a similar type of formula brand that is available, including store brands. Examples can be found at:
  - [pawic.com](http://pawic.com)
- Some special formulas like Alimentum®, Nutramigen™, Elecare®, or Neocate®, do not have a generic store brand alternative. Talk to your pediatrician for guidance.
- When switching brands, you may notice increased fussiness, upset stomach, or change in bowel movements for a short time until your baby gets used to a different brand of formula.

## Preparing Formula:

- Infant formula must be prepared and stored safely:
  - [cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/formula-feeding/infant-formula-preparation-and-storage.html](https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/formula-feeding/infant-formula-preparation-and-storage.html)
- The CDC recommends using ready-to-feed (liquid) formulas for infants under 3 months of age, or if born premature until 3 months after original due date. This is to prevent a rare but serious infection that can occur in babies:
  - [cdc.gov/cronobacter/prevention.html](https://www.cdc.gov/cronobacter/prevention.html)
- If ready-to-feed formula is not available, powdered formula can be used temporarily. Powdered formula must be prepared safely:
  - [cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/healthychildcare/infantfeeding/cleansanitize.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthywater/hygiene/healthychildcare/infantfeeding/cleansanitize.html)

If you have any questions or need more information, please call your pediatrician.

## Don'ts:

- Do not make your own formula.
  - Recipes for homemade formulas may seem healthy or less expensive but they are not safe and do not meet your baby's nutritional needs. Infant deaths have been reported from using homemade formulas.
- Do not add extra water to “stretch” your supply.
  - Watering down formula is dangerous. It can cause nutritional imbalances and lead to serious health problems like seizures. Always mix formula as directed.
- Do not buy formula online individually sold from vendors or auctions, which may sell expired or lower quality products.
- Do not buy formula from overseas that has not been approved by FDA. Some formulas may not meet safety standards.
- Do not use recalled or expired formula.
- Do not switch to cow's milk or toddler formula
  - Cow's milk and toddler formula does not have the correct nutrient balance and is difficult to digest in babies under 1 year, which stresses the baby's body and can lead to health problems which can be dangerous and lead to serious health problems.
  - In cases of extreme difficulty finding infant formula, whole milk or toddler's formula can be used for a brief period ONLY in healthy babies older than 6 months who do not use special hypoallergenic formula.
- Do not use milk alternatives
  - These are not recommended under 1 year; plant-based milks are low in protein and minerals.
- Do not stockpile.
  - Buy enough for 10 to 14 days