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**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**  
DIVISION OF FAMILY HEALTH SERVICES  
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**TO:** Parents, Caregivers, and Families

**FROM:** NJ Department of Health, Division of Family Health Services

**SUBJECT:** Infant Formula Shortage Guidance

The Murphy Administration is currently assessing steps to address the nationwide shortage of infant formula and remains committed to ensuring that New Jersey's families can access the nutritional support and resources needed to care for their infants.

For families impacted by the shortage, the Department recommends the following:

- Talk to your OBGYN or pediatrician about your formula options. They can often tell you which brands are safe alternatives. They may also be able to recommend alternative places to find formula or may have office samples in supply.
- Do not switch to milk or milk alternatives or switch to toddler formula without discussing with your pediatrician. Infants under one year of age should generally not have cow's milk, milk alternatives, or toddler formula.
- Do not water down formula or make your own formula at home. Homemade infant formula recipes have not been evaluated by the FDA and may lack nutrients vital to an infant's growth.
- Connect with your [local Women, Infants and Children \(WIC\) clinic](#) or <https://wic.nj.gov/participantportal/> if you are eligible. They can help advise on your formula needs.
- NJ WIC benefits are now electronic, and families can use their benefits throughout the month without losing them. Families with WIC are encouraged to shop early in their benefit to allow adequate time to revisit a store to fully redeem their infant formula issuance.
- Families with WIC should check the New Jersey WIC Authorized vendor webpage to find a list of WIC approved vendors who may have infant formula in stock. You may want to call first to see if the store has formula in stock.  
<https://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/wic/participants/find-wic-store/>
- The flexibilities below are available to families enrolled in New Jersey WIC:
  - Substitutions are permitted for specialty, exempt formula that is prescribed by a health care provider. WIC has added some additional exempt formulas to their list. The most recent list can be found at:  
<https://www.nj.gov/health/fhs/wic/healthcare/index.shtml>.

- Health care providers can include more than one specialty formula on the WIC exempt, specialty formula medical form. WIC participants now do not need to go back to their health care provider to update the form every time a specialty formula needs to be substituted.
  - WIC participants are permitted to exchange their recalled formula at the store.
- Visit smaller local stores and drugstores that carry formula. You can call ahead to see if they have formula in stock.
- Switch to another brand or type that's available, if recommended by the infant's medical provider. Keep in mind that store brand versions of infant formula are FDA approved and should be considered as an option.
- If buying formula online, purchase from well-recognized distributors and avoid individually sold formula or formula from auction sites.
- In February 2022, Abbott issued a voluntary recall of certain powder formulas of brands including Similac, Alimentum, and EleCare that were manufactured at a Sturgis, Michigan plant linked to potential bacterial contamination at the plant. Check the [lot code](#) on the formula to ensure your formula was not included in the recall. Contact your pediatrician if you have learned that you have fed your child a recalled product.
- Providers can also submit an urgent request for specialized formula to Abbott, a formula manufacturer, by calling 1-800-881-0876 or visiting their formula information and product request form. Abbott is releasing some specialty and metabolic formulas on a case-by-case basis. Ask your OBGYN or pediatrician to submit the request on your behalf.
- Do not stockpile formula. We know you may be worried about your next supply, but all families need immediate access, and stockpiling may further exacerbate shortages. Further, formula has a shelf life and should not be used past the "use by" date indicated on the container.
- Expectant individuals are encouraged to talk to your provider about breastfeeding. Your local WIC or [maternal health consortia](#) can provide breastfeeding support and resources to new families.
- Feeding your infant during this shortage can be stressful. If you are in need of emotional support, your local maternal health consortia can connect you with counseling services, virtual support groups, and other resources you may need to care for your mental health.

Additional guidance can be found on the [US Department of Health and Human Services' website](#).