



Formula Shortage FAQ

Ohio Department of Health Director Bruce Vanderhoff, MD, MBA understands the important need for infant formula for Ohio families. The director and other leaders at the Ohio Department of Health have been working with manufacturers and other partners to find solutions until formula is more readily available.

How are manufacturers helping families find the infant formula they need?

- Mead Johnson has a [searchable store locator](#). You will need to type in the specific product you are looking for, and the website will provide a list of stores that have that product.
- For information related to formula, you can call Abbott's Consumer Hotline at 1-800-986-8540. Your physician can submit an urgent product request by [downloading and completing the form](#).

If I'm running out of formula, can I dilute it to make it last longer?

Unfortunately, no. Diluting infant formula with water or other liquids can be dangerous and even life-threatening for babies. Always follow instructions on the manufacturer's label or those recommended by your healthcare provider on how to prepare formula.

Why shouldn't I feed homemade formula to my child?

Homemade formula often lacks or has inadequate amounts of critical nutrients. Other consequences can include severe nutritional imbalances and foodborne illnesses, both of which can be life-threatening.

Can I substitute a different brand of formula?

Yes, you can substitute another formula. In most cases, if your baby's regular brand of formula is not currently available, it is okay to substitute with a similar version. If you have questions about which formula is acceptable, or if you're still having difficulty finding formula, please contact your child's healthcare provider or WIC clinic.

My child is on a specialized formula for medical reasons.

What should I do if I can't find what my child needs?

You should consult with your baby's healthcare provider if your child requires a specialized formula and you need a recommendation for a comparable formula to use. If you have other questions about your child's nutrition, it is best to consult with your child's healthcare provider to determine if any other forms of nutrition are right for your child.



What should I do if I can't find the formula my baby normally uses?

- Call the store first and ask about product availability.
- Ask a store worker if there is more formula in the back if there isn't any on the shelf.
- Ask when the next shipment arrives.
- Ask when shelves are usually stocked.
- Talk to the pharmacy to see if they can help

WIC Participants:

- Do not wait until the end of the month to purchase your benefits.
- Contact your local WIC office for possible benefit changes.

Can local WIC offices reimburse WIC participants if they buy formula not on the WIC approved list?

Unfortunately, no. Ohio WIC does not have authority to reimburse WIC participants who do not buy WIC-approved formula.

Which formulas are approved for WIC participants?

Contact your physician or local WIC clinic to find out which formula is acceptable.

Can WIC participants buy a different type of formula if the cans are approximately the same size, like with other items?

No. Ohio WIC contracts with Mead Johnson and is only able to provide certain standard Enfamil products. The state is only able to offer a certain variety of specialty formulas.

If WIC participants cannot find formula at a WIC-accepting location, do they lose the formula? Will there be a voucher for formula?

According to [federal regulations](#), WIC benefits are issued on a monthly basis. Any unused product from a given month does NOT carry over to the next month, and no voucher or cash assistance is provided for the unused amount.

Is there anything being done to stop people from hoarding and reselling formula?

The reselling of WIC formula is strictly prohibited and is covered in Ohio WIC Policy and Procedure, and is part of a participant's rights and responsibilities that are read and agreed to as part of the enrollment process when signing the Welcome to WIC Letter. Additionally, most vendors are limiting the amount of formula that can be bought during each purchase, further limiting the ability for potential hoarding.

Can formula be mixed with breast milk?

Yes, in most cases, it is safe to combine the two methods of infant feeding. It is important to follow proper formula mixing guidelines before the addition of breast milk. For example, a powdered formula should be safely mixed with the appropriate amount of water before adding breast milk. Contact a healthcare provider for additional guidance.

Is human donor milk an option if I cannot find formula?

Donor milk from a [Human Milk Bank Association of North America](#) site may be an option with the recommendation of a healthcare provider, or an existing medical need. WIC does not reimburse the cost of human milk.

How do I get help if I want to increase my breast milk supply?

Anyone who needs support can contact the free [Ohio Statewide Breastfeeding Hotline](#) at 888-588-3423 for 24/7 breastfeeding support. WIC breastfeeding peer helpers and lactation consultants can assist parents who wish to increase their milk supply.

Additional resources:

American Academy of Pediatrics: [Is Homemade Baby formula safe?](#)

[U.S. Food and Drug Administration: Infant Safety Dos & Don'ts.](#)

[U.S. Department of Agriculture: Infant Formula Safety.](#)

American Academy of Pediatrics: [Relactation: Starting over with Breastfeeding.](#)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: [Helping Families Find Formula During the Infant Formula Shortage.](#)