

INFANT FORMULA SHORTAGES

Frequently Asked Questions



The information contained on this flyer should **not** be used as a substitute for medical care or the advice of your pediatrician. All content was sourced from the American Academy of Pediatrics. For more information, visit <https://www.healthychildren.org/>.

****Keep in mind, this advice is strictly for URGENT situations. If you have any concerns about your baby's nutrition, please talk with your pediatrician.****

What if baby formula is out of stock everywhere?

- **For most babies, it is OK to switch to any available formula, including store brands. If your baby is on a specialty formula (used for allergies or other special health needs), ask your pediatrician about recommended specialty formula alternatives available for your baby.**
- **Ask your pediatrician** if they can get you formula from a local formula representative or charity organization. Your local WIC office may also be able to suggest places to look.
- **Check smaller stores and drug stores.** Unlike bigger stores, they might not be out of stock.
- **Buy formula online.** Make sure you buy from well-recognized distributors and pharmacies and not sold by individuals or auction sites. **Do not import formula from overseas.** This formula is not FDA-reviewed.

Is it OK to put more water in baby formula?

No. **It is not safe to water down infant formula.** Always follow label instructions or those given to you by your pediatrician. Watering down formula is dangerous and can cause nutritional imbalances in your baby and lead to serious health problems.

Can I make my own baby formula?

The American Academy of Pediatrics **strongly advises against homemade formula.** These recipes are not safe and do not meet your baby's nutritional needs. Infant deaths have been reported from use of some homemade formulas.

Can toddler formula substitute for regular formula?

Toddler formulas are not recommended for infants. However, if you absolutely have no other choice, toddler formula is safe for a few days for babies who are close to a year of age.

Is cow's milk a safe alternative to baby formula?

This is **not recommended for infants 6 months of age and younger.** However, if your baby is 6 months or older, **talk to your pediatrician** to see if cow's milk, in addition to a vitamin, could be an option for your baby.

Can I use plant-based milk instead of baby formula if needed?

Milk alternatives are not recommended for babies under a year of age or infants with certain medical conditions requiring specialized formulas. Soy milk may be an option to give babies who are close to a year of age for a few days in an emergency, but always buy the kind that is fortified with protein and calcium. Make sure to change back to formula as soon as some is available.

Additional Resources

- **Infant Nutrition Information:**
 - <https://www.cincinnatichildrens.org/health/i/infant-nutrition>
- **Choosing an Infant Formula:**
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/infantandtoddlernutrition/formula-feeding/choosing-an-infant-formula.html>
- **How to Prepare and Store Powdered Infant Formula:**
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/nutrition/downloads/prepare-store-powdered-infant-formula-508.pdf>
- **FDA Advises Parents and Caregivers to Not Make or Feed Homemade Infant Formula to Infants**
 - <https://www.fda.gov/food/alerts-advisories-safety-information/fda-advises-parents-and-caregivers-not-make-or-feed-homemade-infant-formula-infants>

FORMULA STORAGE AND BOTTLE FEEDING TIPS

USE QUICKLY OR STORE SAFELY



Use prepared infant formula within **1 hour from start of feeding** and **within 2 hours of preparation**.



If you are not going to use the prepared infant formula within 2 hours, immediately store the bottle in the refrigerator and use it **within 24 hours**.



Throw out any infant formula that's left in the bottle after feeding your baby. **Do not refrigerate it to save for later.** The combination of infant formula and your baby's saliva can cause bacteria to grow.

TIPS FOR BOTTLE FEEDING



Watch your baby for signs that he or she is full, and then stop feeding, even if the bottle is not empty.

Let your baby take breaks from drinking when he or she seems to want them.

Position the bottle at an angle rather than straight up and down so the infant formula only comes out when your baby sucks.

REMEMBER

- **Do not** use a bottle to feed your baby anything besides infant formula or breast milk.
- **Hold your baby close** when you feed him or her a bottle.
- **Always hold the bottle for your baby while feeding.** Propping the bottle in your baby's mouth can increase your baby's risk of choking, ear infections, and tooth decay.
- **Do not put your baby to bed with a bottle.** Infant formula can pool around the baby's teeth and this can cause tooth decay.
- **Do not force your baby to finish the bottle** if your baby is showing signs of fullness.

If your baby is younger than 2 months old, was born prematurely, or has a weakened immune system, you may want to take extra precautions when preparing infant formula.

Visit <https://www.cdc.gov/cronobacter/infection-and-infants.html> to learn more.