

Navigating the Formula Shortage

The nationwide shortage of infant formula has created a concerning and stressful situation for families.

If you are struggling to find your child's usual formula, you can confidently purchase the store brand equivalent product. Do not pass up available formula simply because it is not the exact product you have previously used. Many formulas are nearly identical, so your child should tolerate changing brands without problems.

Safety

- **For infants younger than 6-months who cannot be breastfed**, infant formula should be their only source of nutrition.
- **Never dilute formula with more water.** This can cause serious medical problems.
- **Do not give an infant who is younger than 12-months old** goat's milk, plant-based milks (almond, soy, oat, etc.), juice, or toddler formula. These products do not provide the correct nutrition for infants. *For healthy children older than 6 months, the American Academy of Pediatrics has approved using whole milk for a short time until formula is available again. Please check with your pediatrician.*
- **It is dangerous to try to make your own formula.** Please do not do it.
- **We do not recommend ordering formula products online from other countries.** The quality of the product cannot be verified and could be harmful to your baby. Products manufactured outside the U.S. are safe to use if they have been properly imported.
- **Always check the expiration date and seal on formula.** If it is the date is past or it is not sealed, do not feed it to your child.



Strategies to find formula

- **Keep a list of similar products handy** so you can reference it during shopping.
- **Ask your family and friends to help you look for formula.** Make sure they have a photo or list to reference and ask everyone you know to check the baby aisle every time they go shopping.
- **Check stores where you may not usually shop** – drug stores, wholesale stores and grocery stores carry name brand and often their own store brand formulas.
- **Check online resources** where people are trading and sharing formula, such as www.babyformulaexchange.com and social media groups in your local area.



Breastfeeding

- **Breastfeeding is an important infant feeding option.** Maintaining and increasing a mother's breast milk supply, if possible, is always important.
- **If you are combining breastfeeding and formula feeding,** breastfeed or pump your milk more often to increase your milk supply.
- **If you are a mother with extra milk, please consider donating your milk to a milk bank.** Mothers should not informally share their milk with each other. It may be unsafe for a baby to be fed another mother's milk.
- **If you are breastfeeding or planning to breastfeed a new baby,** there are many resources that can help you find success. Your pediatrician's office, birth hospital and OBGYN can all help connect you to lactation specialists.

For more information on a wide variety of breastfeeding topics, please consult the Cincinnati Children's Center for Breastfeeding Medicine.

