



# Infant Formula Shortage 2022

Some families in North Carolina are facing challenges accessing infant formulas. These challenges are related to the [February recall](#) of certain Abbott infant formulas, the resulting increased demand for other brands of formula, and the lingering effects of supply issues during the pandemic.

During these on-going shortages, our top priority is to help families access safe, healthy feeding options for their infants during these on-going shortages. NCDHHS provides the following guidance on what families can do and what they should avoid.

## What can families do?

- If an infant has been prescribed a specific formula and the availability of safe products is limited, families should work with the child's health care provider to determine the best feeding plan.
- If an infant has been drinking or is prescribed a specific formula and the availability of safe products is limited, families should work with the child's health care provider to determine the best feeding plan. For WIC participants with a specialized formula prescription, a medical provider must change the prescription. Talk with your child's health care provider about possible options during the shortage.
- Families can turn to community organizations, reputable online retailers, distributors, and manufacturers as sources for finding formula.
- Families using a combination feeding of breast milk and iron-fortified infant formula may wish to consider increasing the frequency of breastfeeding or pumping to decrease the amount of formula needed. Families participating in WIC may also contact their local WIC clinic for additional breastfeeding support and breast pump issuance as appropriate.
- If you see a price that seems too high, whether at the store or on Facebook or other online selling platforms, report it to the North Carolina Department of Justice by filing a complaint at <https://ncdoj.gov/gouging> or by calling 1-877-5-NO-SCAM.
- [WIC](#) is the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children that provides healthy food and health care support for low-income families. For infants enrolled in the program, WIC provides assistance to cover the cost of infant formulas in the first year of life. WIC participants who cannot find formula in local stores should first contact their [local WIC agency](#) to get help finding available formula in the community. If specialized formula is not available in local stores, the local WIC agency can submit an order request for the formula from the manufacturer through the state WIC agency.
- Families needing help with formula costs who have not applied for assistance are encouraged to learn more about WIC at <https://www.nutritionnc.com/wic/> or apply for FNS (formerly known as food stamps) at <https://epass.nc.gov>.

## What should families avoid?

- The FDA advises parents and caregivers to not make homemade infant formula. Homemade formula recipes have not been evaluated by the FDA and may lack nutrients vital to an infant's growth.
- Families are advised not to water down formula to stretch it out; it is not safe to do so. Always follow label instructions or those given to you by your health care provider.
- Toddler formula, cow's milk and plant-based milk alternatives are not recommended before a child's first birthday.
- Do not buy formula from overseas, online auctions, or unknown individuals. Storage and shipping conditions may impact formula safety. [The American Academy of Pediatrics](#) discourages families from purchasing formula online that comes from outside the United States. These products are not regulated by the FDA, and there may be confusion over labeling.

## What is NCDHHS doing to help?

- NCDHHS continues to work with local, state, and federal partners to closely monitor formula supply and to keep local WIC agencies and partners updated.
- NCDHHS is also sharing information with families and consumers through news outlets and social media. Updated information is available at [www.nutritionnc.com/wic](http://www.nutritionnc.com/wic)
- NC WIC is placing a high volume of orders of formula that local WIC agencies have requested on behalf of families and has shifted extra staff to meet the needs. The volume of orders placed by NC WIC has increased 525% when comparing the past month to January 2022.

## What other resources are available?

- [President Biden's Fact Sheet](#)
- [AAP/Healthychildren.org Resource for Parents](#)
- [FDA Consumer Page on Powdered Infant Formula Recall](#)
- [USDA Infant Formula Safety](#)
- [FDA Infant Formula: Safety Do's and Don'ts](#)

