

Date: May 27, 2022
To: Medical Care Providers
From: Julie Vaishampayan, MD, MPH, Health Officer

Please distribute to all providers and relevant medical staff in your office.

Health Advisory

Infant formula shortages

Situation: The pandemic and the recent 2022 Abbott recall of certain powdered infant formula have led to product-based shortages of major infant formula brands. The infant formula shortage will affect all infant formula consumers throughout the state of California. Our WIC Program has provided additional resources below as you work with your patients during this ongoing shortage.

Recommendations

For the Parents and Caregivers:

Advise that infants need a specific balance of nutrients. To protect infant health, use products that meet federal standards that ensure the formula is as close as possible to human milk and safe and free of harmful bacteria. The infant formula should be prepared according to the package directions. Patients may contact your office about a safe alternative to their current formula if they cannot find it. WIC participants may require a prescription to switch to a different brand or type of formula.

How to Find Infant Formula in Stores

Due to recent formula shortages, some stores may limit the number of cans that can be purchased per shopping trip. Some tips for families:

- Call stores before you shop to ask if your formula is in stock or find out when they expect to receive their next shipment.
- Parents and caregivers should never over or under dilute infant formulas and should not make or feed homemade infant formula to infants.

For WIC Participants:

Stanislaus County WIC participants are encouraged to visit our webpage [Stanislaus WIC \(www.schsa.org/publichealth/programs/wic/\)](http://www.schsa.org/publichealth/programs/wic/) for local information, including a list of WIC authorized vendors and contact information. Information will be updated on this page as needed. WIC provides breastfeeding support for those who want to continue or increase breastfeeding. They may call the Breastfeeding Helpline at (209) 525-4838 or text (888)413-8165 for support.

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For Prenatal Women:

Make patients aware of the current formula shortage and discuss feeding options for their families. Prenatal women should consider breastfeeding their newborn babies. Breastfeeding provides the best nutrition for the baby and is the most widely recommended way to feed a newborn. Breast milk contains the right balance of nutrients for the baby and boosts the baby's immune system. The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months after birth and then breastfeeding in combination with solid foods until at least age one. Breastfeeding support is available through our local hospitals and WIC.

Additional resources:

- Information for WIC Families on Infant Formula Availability from the CA Department of Public Health WIC Program visit <https://www.myfamily.wic.ca.gov/Home/FormulaShortage#FormulaShortage>
 - For the Stanislaus County Health Services Agency WIC Program visit [Stanislaus WIC - http://www.schsa.org/publichealth/programs/wic/](http://www.schsa.org/publichealth/programs/wic/)
 - Information and helpful resources related to the recent national infant formula shortage from the California Department of Public Health MCAH in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).
 - English: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/Pages/Infant-Formula-Availability/Infant-Formula-Availability.aspx>
 - Spanish: <https://www.cdph.ca.gov/Programs/CFH/Pages/Infant-Formula-Availability/Formu-Para-Bebes.aspx>
 - For information from the American Academy of Pediatrics on formula shortages, visit <https://www.healthychildren.org/English/tips-tools/ask-the-pediatrician/Pages/Are-there-shortages-of-infant-formula-due-to-COVID-19.aspx>
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