



To: CAHAN San Diego Participants

Date: May 20, 2022

From: Medical Care Services

Health Advisory: Nationwide shortage of infant formulas may increase risk for inadequate nutrition in infants

Key Messages

- Parents may be struggling to obtain sufficient formula to feed their infant and may resort to unsafe practices, such as diluting formula or using homemade formulas.
- The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has launched a website (hhs.gov/formula) with resources for families struggling to find baby formula.
- The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH)'s Women, Infants & Children (WIC) program have also released guidance for healthcare professionals and families during this time. Refer to these resources and others at the end of this advisory.
- Providers are requested to report any adverse clinical outcomes that may be a result of inadequate infant nutrition secondary to the formula shortage by emailing HealthCareSupport.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov.

Situation

A February 24, 2022, [CAHAN](#) notified participants of a Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) investigation of cases of *Cronobacter sakazakii* infection in multiple states potentially linked to powdered infant formula. Many Abbott Nutrition products were voluntarily recalled, and production was paused on formulas manufactured in their Sturgis, Michigan plant. This event, in combination with supply chain delays, has resulted in a nationwide shortage of infant formula.

Background

Previously, the United States Food and Drug Administration (FDA), on February 24, 2021, issued a [health advisory](#) against using recipes to make homemade infant formula. Using homemade infant formula may lead to significant health problems for infants. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) strongly [advises](#) against homemade formulas for the same reasons. Babies need very specific amounts of vitamins and minerals. Homemade formulas may contain too little or too much of certain components and/or may have an increased risk of contamination.

Over the last week, numerous resources have been released by the AAP, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the California Department of Public Health (CDPH)/Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program to assist families and providers during the formula shortage. These and other resources can be found at the bottom of this health advisory.

The Federal government is taking action to address the infant formula shortage by invoking the Defense Production Act to increase baby formula supplies and launching [Operation Fly Formula](#) to accelerate the importation of infant formula. FDA has been working with Abbott and other manufacturers to increase formula production and availability, including reaching an agreement to allow the Sturgis facility to reopen within the next couple of weeks.

[CDPH/WIC is also working closely with federal partners](#) at the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) to monitor participant access to WIC-provided formulas. The USDA has provided state WIC agencies regulatory flexibilities in response to the recall. However, CDPH/WIC has a contractual agreement with Mead Johnson for Enfamil products. As such, at this time, WIC families must purchase the formula available on their WIC card. Other brands of formula cannot be purchased. If a WIC family's healthcare provider has written a prescription for a special formula, and it is not available at any stores, they should contact their [local WIC office](#). Their doctor may write a prescription for another special formula or multiple special formulas that will work for their baby.

Providers should take the current formula shortage into account when counseling families to make important feeding decisions for their babies. The resources provided below can be utilized to provide families with accurate information about the risks and benefits of formula feeding so they can make a true, informed choice. Parents who are breastfeeding or are considering breastfeeding should be provided with appropriate anticipatory guidance and support. Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine's (ABM) evidence-based [clinical protocols](#) can be helpful for breastfeeding, human milk, and lactation best practices and are available in a variety of languages.

Provider Actions Requested

1. Share information about safe feeding practices with parents of infants.
2. Inquire about feeding practices at each visit, especially with children less than one year of age.
3. **Report any suspect and confirmed** adverse clinical outcomes related to infant formula and feeding practices during business hours Monday through Friday by email to HealthCareSupport.HHSA@sdcounty.ca.gov.
4. Review and consider printing the resources below for education with your staff and the families of your patients.

Resources

- AAP: [Healthychildren.org](#) article [With the baby formula shortage, what should I do if I can't find any?](#) (available in [Spanish](#))
- AAP: 2011 [Pediatrics in Review](#) article with a formula comparison chart
- AAP-CA3: [Baby Formula Shortage and What Parents Should Do](#) graphic
- Abbott: Healthcare professionals can order a product and have it shipped to a patient or hospital by downloading the form at <https://abbottnutrition.com/metabolics> and faxing the completed form with a physician order to 877-293-9145.
- ABM: [Statement on Shortage of Breastmilk Substitutes](#)
- CDPH: [Infant Formula website](#) (www.cdph.ca.gov/formula; available in multiple languages)
- CDPH: [5/13/2022 Health Advisory](#): CDPH Advises Parents and Caregivers Against Making or Feeding Homemade Infant Formula to Infants
- CDPH: [Infant Formula Communications Toolkit](#) (available in multiple languages)
- HHS: [Fact Sheet: Helping Families Find Formula During the Infant Formula Shortage](#) (hhs.gov/formula; available in [Spanish](#))

Thank you for your participation.

CAHAN San Diego

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