

DHSS Press Release

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DPH OFFERS GUIDANCE AND RESOURCES ON HOW TO NAVIGATE THE INFANT FORMULA SUPPLY SHORTAGE

DOVER (May 17, 2022) – The Division of Public Health (DPH) is providing guidance to families struggling to find formula due to a shortage caused by a supply chain issues, including avoiding taking certain measures that could be harmful to their infant's health.

DPH sent out a [letter](#) from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau to families and maternal child health stakeholders, offering individuals information on how to safely navigate the shortages.

Parents and caregivers are offered the following guidance:

- Talk to your doctor: Families should consult their pediatrician to discuss the best options for their child. Doctors can provide guidance on comparable formula and specialized formula to meet their babies' medical and nutrition needs.
- Consider a substitute formula: For most babies, it is OK to use a similar version of their formula if their regular brand of formula is not currently available. Talk with your baby's pediatrician about alternatives.
- Check the manufacture's site online for formula availability before going to a store to purchase.

DPH reminds parents/guardians:

- Do not make or use homemade formula: Per the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and Food and Drug Administration (FDA), homemade formulas often lack or have inadequate amounts of critical nutrients vital for a babies growth and development and in some cases can cause infants to be hospitalized due to low calcium.
- Never dilute formula: Watering down infant formula can be dangerous and even life-threatening, leading to a serious nutritional deficit and health issues.

- Consider a substitute formula: For most babies, if their regular brand of formula is not currently available, using a similar version of their formula is ok. Talk with your baby's pediatrician about alternatives.
- If not receiving breast milk, formula should be used until your baby turns 1 year old, but if your child is over six months you can start to supplement nutrition with some solids. Talk to your pediatrician about introducing some solids like fortified cereal, mashed bananas and pureed poultry and beans.
- Talk to your doctor: Families should consult their pediatrician to discuss the best options for their child. Doctors can provide guidance on comparable formula and specialized formula to meet their babies' medical and nutrition needs.
- Breastfeed your child: When possible, breastfeeding is the healthiest option for children under age 1.
- For parents who are breastfeeding or need additional support, they may want to consider a lactation consultant or support groups, or seek assistance to access a breast pump at a low cost through your insurance provider, Medicaid, or WIC to assist with milk supply. There are also breast milk banks that properly store, test and distribute donated mothers' milk to meet the specific needs of infants for whom human milk is prescribed by physicians. The Delaware WIC program offers breastfeeding assistance to new mothers, including peer counselors, lactation consultants and manual pumps. Details on WIC's breastfeeding programs can be found [here](#).

DPH has also taken the following steps to help parents and caregivers as the supply chain issues get resolved nationwide:

- WIC recipients have been asked to return any unused formula to the [Food Bank of Delaware](#) or another state agency food pantries.
- WIC recipients also were granted a waiver to substitute formula this winter when supply chain issues that were made worse by a recall first emerged. A [chart](#) of formula alternatives was created to help parents and caregivers select the right formula for their child.
- Parents who are breastfeeding or need additional support may want to consider a lactation consultant or support groups, or seek assistance to access a breast pump at a low cost through their insurance provider, Medicaid, or WIC to assist with milk supply. The Delaware WIC program offers breastfeeding assistance to new mothers, including peer counselors, lactation consultants and manual pumps. Details on WIC's breastfeeding programs can be found [here](#).
- DPH reminds parents that state and community resources that could be helpful during this time are available, such as WIC, SNAP, or TANF to help with the cost of buying formula or to find other infant supplies through local food banks including the [Food Bank of Delaware](#). DPH also offers a breastfeeding [guide](#) for mothers who want to find support or learn more about breastfeeding.
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Several birth hospitals in Delaware also offer breastfeeding support and parent education. Individuals should check with their local hospital to see what services are offered.

Delawareans are encouraged to visit dethrives.com for up-to-date information on Delaware's response to the infant formula supply chain issues, call 211 for community resources and services near you, or follow DEThrives and DPH on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).

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Anyone who is deaf, hard of hearing, Deaf-Blind or speech disabled can contact DPH by dialing 711 first using specialized devices (i.e., TTY, TeleBraille, voice devices). The 711 service is free and to learn more about how it works, please visit delawarerelay.com. Delaware Health and Social Services is committed to improving the quality of the lives of Delaware's citizens by promoting health and well-being, fostering self-sufficiency, and protecting vulnerable populations.