

GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES RESOURCES FOR NEW YORK FAMILIES AMID INFANT FORMULA SHORTAGES

New York State Department of Health Continues to Support the Distribution of Formula, Diapers, and Infant Supplies, Including for New York State WIC Participants, and is Actively Monitoring Ongoing Shortages

New Yorkers Should Visit New York State Women, Infants And Children Office or Prescreen with the Office's Chatbot to Verify Infant Eligibility for WIC Benefits.

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced resources for New York families amid nationwide infant formula shortages. On February 17, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration warned consumers not to use certain powdered infant formula products from Abbott Nutrition's Sturgis, Michigan facility, and Abbott initiated a voluntary recall of certain products. Since that time, the Food and Drug Administration has been working with Abbott and other manufacturers to bring safe products to the U.S. market and to increase the availability of infant and specialty formula products.

"In close coordination with our federal partners, New York State will continue to do everything possible to support New York families in need of formula for their infants," Governor Hochul said. "My administration is committed to ensuring every newborn and child has access to the nutritional support they need to stay healthy. I urge every parent and guardian to take advantage of these resources and keep up to date with important information to take care of their families."

Throughout the pandemic, the Department of Health has continued to support the distribution of diapers, formula, and other infant supplies through its home visiting program and partnership networks. Through management of the New York State WIC Program, the New York State Department of Health continues to monitor supply chain disruptions that may be impacting its participants.

In light of the recent formula supply issues, the Department has increased communication with formula manufacturers to monitor the production of can sizes, supply, and shipments. The New York State WIC Program has been able to help participants obtain the formulas needed through alternate stores with the formulas in stock and coordinate with manufacturers to get formula to participants when they cannot find it locally. New York WIC participants should contact their local agency for assistance locating products when needed.

Through Wanda, the Department's chatbot, New Yorkers can receive direct, accessible online navigation support through a "personal WIC assistant" and see if their infant is eligible for WIC benefits.

State Health Commissioner Dr. Mary T. Bassett said, "Reports of infant formula supply shortages are concerning, and we urge New York families to follow the Department's recommendations as we continue to monitor the situation in New York. New York families should work with their infant's medical provider if a new formula suggestion is needed to meet their infant's needs, and all New Yorkers should visit their local New York State Women, Infants and Children Office or prescreen with Wanda, the Department's chatbot, to see if their infant is eligible for WIC benefits. The Department remains

committed to ensuring families have the nutritional support and resources needed to best care for our youngest New Yorkers."

In an effort to meet current demand, many stores are limiting the amount of formula customers can purchase at one time. It is important that families don't hoard formula, which will further impact the supply chain and other families in their community. For families struggling to find the formula they need for their baby, the Department recommends the following:

- Call your OBGYN or the infant's medical provider to see if they have in office samples or can suggest a similar formula that may be more readily available in stores that is nutritionally similar to meet the infant's needs.
- Switch to another brand or type that's available, if recommended by the infant's medical provider.
- Contact a local New York State Women, Infants and Children Office or prescreen with Wanda, the Department's chatbot, to see if the infant is eligible for WIC benefits.
- Families with WIC should check the New York State Women, Infants and Children vendor site to find a list of WIC approved vendors who may have formula in stock.
- Visit smaller stores and drugstores that carry formula. You may want to call first to see if they have formula in stock.
- Look online for options available but be sure to only order from well-recognized distributors and pharmacies. Don't buy formula online from people you don't know on social media sites, online auctions, or overseas.
- Check the lot code on the formula that you already have to make sure it wasn't recalled. Don't throw away formula that wasn't part of the recall, unless it is expired.
- Be sure to follow the formula manufacturer's preparation and storage instructions.
- Don't use toddler formula to feed infants.
- Don't water down formula or try to make infant formula at home.
- Expectant individuals are encouraged to consult with a provider about breastfeeding their infant. The New York State WIC program also provides breastfeeding support and resources to new families. Families feeding a baby with human milk from a source other than the baby's mother should only use milk from a source that has screened its milk donors and taken other precautions to ensure the safety of its milk.

The Department shares the FDA's recommendation that families should not make formulas at home and encourages caregivers to work with their child's health care provider for recommendations on changing feeding practices, if needed.

As New York families seek alternate sources for formula, the New York State Division of Consumer Protection has issued an alert reminding parents to be aware of online scams and unscrupulous vendors who may try to take advantage of the situation.

The Department of Health will continue to monitor the situation and communicate openly with New York families. For more information, support, and WIC eligibility, visit New York State Women, Infants and Children Office or prescreen with Wanda.

Caregivers can also read the latest from the FDA here.

Additional news available at www.governor.ny.gov

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Thank You.