

WIC Added Formula Choices

As the nation continues to deal with supply shortages of infant formula, the California Department of Public Health's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program is continuing to help WIC families by greatly expanding the list of formula brands eligible for purchase with WIC benefits. Before current supply issues, WIC families could choose to purchase five eligible brands, many of which were becoming increasingly difficult to find. California WIC participants can now choose from more than 130 different formula brands. The state plans to continue to expand the list of eligible formula brands. WIC serves pregnant and post-partum women, infants and children with a gross income of no more than 185 percent of the federal poverty level.

"We're taking immediate action to support California families, making sure WIC beneficiaries have access to more formulas – expanding the eligibility from 5 formulas to more than 130," said Governor Gavin Newsom. "We'll continue working closely with public and private partners to support low-income and all families throughout the state."

WIC families can find the latest updates at MyFamily.WIC.ca.gov or the [California WIC App](#) and should contact their local WIC office with questions on how these options work for infants. General information on the infant formula shortage is available on the [CDPH Infant Formula web page](#) and additional resources for all families are regularly added.

In California, 50% percent of all infants rely on the WIC nutrition program, and of these, about 80% use formula in whole or in part to meet their nutritional needs. Babies usually tolerate alternative formulas except in the case of special therapeutic formula.

The state's action temporarily expands the existing WIC authorized product list to include additional infant formula options. These newer options will be removed once infant formulas are widely available again.

Tips for finding infant formula

- Shop at different times of the day. Stores get shipments at different times of the day, so the shelves may be empty in the morning and stocked in the evening.
- Non-WIC parents and caregivers who face a shortage should call their health care providers first to help them navigate infant formula options when supplies are scarce.
- Call your local food bank as donations of formula are welcomed there.
- Call 2-1-1 to see what local resources they provide or visit
- Consider using human milk from one of the following certified human milk banks: mothersmilk.org or <https://uchealth.service-now.com/csp>.
- Parents and caregivers are advised to NOT dilute formula or use homemade recipes for substitution as this can seriously harm a baby's health. Call your healthcare provider for additional guidance as to a safe substitution if no formula from safe sources can be found near you.