

# Navigating the Formula Shortage

(Expecting or recently delivered)

The birth of a new child is a big transition. Parents often have many emotions. The recent recalls and shortages of baby formula has led to feelings of anxiety for many families. You have some safe options though.

## Did you know?

- The American Academy of Pediatrics believes breastfeeding is the best source of nutrition through first year.
- Breast milk is naturally designed to best meet the needs of your baby. It has all the needed nutrients. It also helps build and support your baby's immune system.

## Breastfeeding

You can:

- Feed your newborn from the breast
- Pump your breasts and feed your milk by bottle to your newborn

Lactation consultants at University of Iowa Health Care will help you during your journey: before giving birth, during your hospital stay, and after you go home. Call **319-356-2294** to schedule an in-person or telemedicine visit.

If you use WIC, call your local WIC office for other breastfeeding support.

## Breast Pumps

Most insurance providers cover buying a breast pump, this includes Medicaid. Call your insurance company to learn how to buy one. If you deliver at the University of Iowa Health Care a breast pump will be available during your stay.

## Relactation

**This means reestablishing breastmilk after you stopped for some time.**

- Sometimes you can re-start breastfeeding or making milk after stopping.
- This works best if you gave birth within the last 3 months. It also works better if your milk supply has been low.
- You may not be able to only breastfeed though. You may not have your previous milk volumes.

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(My baby is getting formula)

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## Donor Milk

**Pasteurized donor milk can be bought from an accredited milk bank.**

- The cost varies. Check with your local milk bank.
- The Mother's Milk Bank of Iowa is at 119 2<sup>nd</sup> St., Suite 400 Coralville, IA 52241.
- Call 1-877-891-5347 or go to [uichildrens.org/mothers-milk-bank-iowa](http://uichildrens.org/mothers-milk-bank-iowa) to learn more.

**Are you thinking about using a friend or family's breastmilk?**

If yes, think about your baby's safety. Think about the risks and benefits.

**Is it safe to buy breast milk over the internet or from someone you do not know well?**

No. The Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine strongly discouraged this. The donors are not known and cannot be medically screened. The **Human Milk Banking Association of North America** accredits nonprofit milk banks. This includes the bank in Coralville, Iowa. It sets guidelines for pasteurized donor human milk.

## Common Questions and Answers

The below information is **only for urgent needs**. Talk with your baby's doctor if you have concerns about your baby's nutrition.

**What if baby formula is out of stock everywhere?**

- Place only the amount of formula or milk your baby will eat in the bottle. This will limit waste.
- Try smaller stores, drug stores, and online retailers.
- Do not import from overseas. It is not FDA-reviewed.
- It is okay to change formulas for most babies. Talk with your baby's doctor about other specialty formulas.
- If you use WIC, call your local WIC office. They can help you with other brands that are covered.
- Talk with your baby's doctor about when to start feeding solid foods.

**Is it okay to put more water in baby formula?**

No. Watering down formula causes nutritional imbalances. This can lead to serious health problems. Always mix formula as directed by the manufacturer.

**Can I make my own baby formula?**

No. The American Academy of Pediatrics strongly advises against homemade formula. They are not safe. They do not meet your baby's nutritional needs. Deaths have been linked to homemade formulas.

**Can toddler formula be used instead of baby formula?**

Toddler formulas should not be used for babies. If you have no other choice, it is safe for a few days for babies who are close to 1 year of age.

**Is whole vitamin D milk (animal's milk) safe?**

- Talk to your baby's doctor **before** giving cow's milk. This may be safe for a short time if your baby is 6 months of age.
- Milk from other animals, such as goats, should not be given to your baby.

**Can I use plant-based milk (soy, almond) instead of baby formula?**

No. These are not suggested for babies under 1 year of age. They should not be used for babies with certain health conditions that need special formulas.

**To learn more, go to:**

- [HealthyChildren.org](https://www.healthychildren.org)
  - [With the baby formula shortage, what should I do if I can't find any?](#)
- [uslca.org](https://www.uslca.org)
  - [Navigating-the-US-Formula-Shortage.pdf](#)
- [bfmed.org](https://www.bfmed.org)
  - [ABM Statement on Shortage of Breastmilk Substitutes](#)