



TOPICS IN THE NEWS:

The Baby Formula Shortage May 2022

INTRODUCTION

“It shouldn’t be like this.” a quote from a woman having difficulty finding enough formula to feed her infant twins expresses the shock, fear, and dismay that many families are facing due to national shortages of baby formula. [Particularly acute for black and Hispanic](#) families, the cause of the shortage is complex and impacted by [safety recalls](#), [supply chain disruptions](#), and [FDA nutritional requirements](#).

Compounding the shortage is the lack of safe alternatives, making families consider [desperate measures](#). Many believe that breastfeeding is an [economical and obvious answer](#), but health conditions, an inability to produce sufficient breastmilk and economic impediments may make breastfeeding impossible or unreliable for many women. In addition, FDA and pediatrician approved nutritional guidelines specifically advise against [homemade formula](#) and other dairy and non-dairy based substitutes due to insufficient nutritional values and the potential for illness in babies. In response to the formula shortage, recommendations against the [use of cow’s milk](#) for older children (not infants) for short periods of time, have been loosened. Despite this, many families are still left with few options to feed their children.

Government support for families struggling with the shortage primarily comes through [WIC](#) (Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children) a USDA program managed at the state level. [Michigan’s WIC program](#) has been working feverishly to guide parents through this crisis. It supports [thousands of women and children statewide](#), offering nutritional guidance, food benefits, referrals to other support programs and [help finding formula online](#) and through [WIC clinics](#) across the state. Michigan’s [Temporary choices for Powder Formula](#) and other online resources are often relied on by other states, as well.

Short term solutions for the shortage involve restoring production at [Michigan’s Abbott manufacturing plant](#) and [invoking the Defense Production Act](#) and other legal measures that prioritize transportation of raw materials and allow the importation of formula from other countries. The USDA has made temporary changes to [extend flexibility to state WIC programs](#) to allow purchase of alternate sizes, forms or brands of formula and the [FTC has launched an inquiry](#) to discover any unfair business practices that may have contributed to the shortage. Eventual outcomes may take the form of changes to [law, policy and programming](#) and [moving ahead with planned improvements](#) to avert future similarly devastating situations.

If you need assistance accessing any of these items or need more information, please contact us at librarian@michigan.gov or by phone at 517-335-1477.

READ UP

- [Find Formula During the Infant Formula Shortage](#) - U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- [Addressing the Infant Formula Shortage](#) - White House Formula Tracking Website
- [White House Releases on Operation Fly Formula](#)
- ["White House bolsters efforts to get baby formula into the hands of WIC recipients,"](#) *NPR*, 5/13/2022
- ["Whitmer: MI Coordinating Statewide Response to Baby Formula Shortage",](#) *Gongwer*, 5/13/2022
- ["Baby formula shortage solutions, being addressed in Michigan",](#) *Fox 2 Detroit*, May 13, 2022
- ["Michigan baby formula factory, Abbott, reaches deal with FDA to reopen",](#) *Bridge Michigan*, 5/17/2022
- ["Nestlé is flying baby formula into America as shortage continues"](#) *CNN Business*, 5/17/2022
- ["The formula shortage is a crisis for men, too",](#) *Washington Post*, 5/20/2022
- ["Lawmakers push for allowing WIC participants to buy baby formula online",](#) *WFSB*, 5/23/2022
- [Emergency Declaration Under 49 CFR § 390.23 No. 2022-005](#), 5/23/2022
- ["What you need to know about the Defense Production Act – the 1950s law Biden invoked to try to end the baby formula shortage",](#) *Michigan Ross – Faculty News & Research*, May 23, 2022
- ["Abbott to reopen Michigan formula plant June 4",](#) *Crains Detroit Business*, 5/24/2022
- ["Whistleblower report on baby formula didn't reach top FDA food safety official",](#) *Washington Post*, 5/25/2022
- [Testimony of Robert M. Califf, M.D. Commissioner of Food and Drugs...](#), 5/25/2022
- ["More baby formula shipments arrive from overseas in an effort to ease the shortage",](#) *NPR*, 5/28/2022
- [Making WIC Work Better](#), Food Research & Action Center, May 2019.
- ["With formula in short supply, moms are pumping breast milk to help others",](#) *CNN Health*, 5/31/2022
- ["Baby Formula Shortage Worsens, Hitting Low-Income Families Hardest",](#) *Wall Street Journal*, 6/1/2022
- ["Baby-food sales surge amid the baby-formula shortage, as more parents consider transitioning babies out of the milk phase sooner",](#) *MarketWatch*, 6/1/2022

LISTEN UP

- ["Michigan baby formula plant at center of national shortage",](#) *Stateside* podcast, 5/19/2022
- ["The government program that contributed to the baby formula shortage",](#) *Planet Money*, 5/23/2022
- ["NEXT: Bobbie Organic Infant Formula CEO Laura Modi"](#) *Washington Post Live*, 6/2/2022