

Supporting Parents During the Formula Shortage

From the Breastfeeding Resiliency, Engagement, and Empowerment (BFREE) Team



The infant formula shortage has made it difficult for parents who need it to get formula. We have put together information and resources to help affected families navigate this challenge.

If you are pregnant, learn about the benefits of breastfeeding

Visit the [Office of Women's Health's website](#) to learn more about how breastfeeding can improve your health and your baby's health.

If you have recently given birth, work on building up your breastmilk supply

Refer to our extensive resource lists below for more information about contacting a lactation consultant who can work with you to build your supply.

Use as much of your own breastmilk as possible to reduce the need for formula

If you breastfeed, keep up your supply with frequent breastfeeding and/or pumping. If you recently stopped breastfeeding, you may be able to [regain your supply](#). Even a small amount of breastmilk can reduce the amount of formula your baby needs.

Tip: Follow the [BFREE Team on Facebook](#) for information about our free, virtual breastfeeding support groups, held in English and Spanish on Zoom.

Check the "use-by" date

All FDA-approved formulas have a "use-by" date. After this date, the amount of nutrients in the formula decreases. Do not feed your baby expired formula, as your baby may not get all the nutrients they need.

Tip: Be sure to check your formula's lot number to see if it has been recalled.

Do not water down or make your own formula

It is not safe to water down formula or make your own formula at home. It can lead to serious nutritional imbalances and seizures. Always mix formula as directed by the manufacturer. Do not provide toddler formulas or other liquids such as juice or plant-based milk alternatives to your baby, and only give small amounts of water after 6 months of age.

Tip: If your baby is at least 6 months and on regular formula, the [American Academy Pediatrics](#) states that whole cow's milk can be used only for a short time with your pediatrician's approval. Check with your pediatrician before feeding cow's milk (along with an iron supplement) instead of formula.

Check your local and online community and parent groups for formula

There are community-based organizations that offer opportunities for families to connect, find formula, donate, access additional information and resources, and much more. Please always follow your provider's guidance when assessing your options. The NYS Division of Consumer Protection has issued an [alert](#) reminding parents to be aware of online scams and un reputable vendors who may try to take advantage of the situation. Please contact a [Lactation Consultant](#) for help.

Facebook groups: Formula Fairies, Support for Parents on Long Island During the Formula Shortage, and Suffolk County Formula Connection.

Community sites: Angels of Long Island and Branches Long Island.

Check with your provider before switching formulas

A temporary switch to any available formula, including store brands, can be safe. If your baby is on an extensively hydrolyzed or amino acid-based formula, check with your pediatrician for recommended alternatives.

Tip: Ask your baby's doctor if they have formula samples in the office they can provide.

Consider buying breastmilk to supplement feeding

Human breastmilk can be safely purchased from the [New York Milk Bank](#). Breastmilk from a bank is carefully screened and pasteurized to ensure safety for your baby.

Additional resources

Pump Rental

Most insurances are required to provide breast pumps for nursing women. Call the number on the back of your insurance card and ask how to get a breast pump. If they will not provide the pump, you need to call the appropriate complaint line:

- Medicaid/NYS Managed Care: 1-800-206-8125
- Other insurances: 1-800-428-9071

Hospitals and other care providers, including many of those listed above have access to breast pumps for rent. Ask any of them for information or visit the following websites:

- Medela Breast Pumps
 - Choose your insurance (e.g. “NYS Medicaid”) and “New York” to see options
- Ameda Breast Pumps
- Better Living Now
- Hampton Homecare

Finding a Lactation Consultant and Breastfeeding Support

- Allied Breastfeeding Support
- Long Island Doula Association
- Nurse Family Partnership
- United States Lactation Consultant Association
- International Lactation Consultant Association
- Baby Café USA
- New York Lactation Consultant Association-Long Island
- La Leche League
- Breastfeeding Resiliency, Engagement, and Empowerment (BFREE) Team Baby Café
 - Visit <http://bit.ly/bfreezoombabycafe> (Meeting ID: 923 0683 0122; Passcode: 1) for:
 - Breastfeeding Support Classes in English every Tuesday 7-8pm and Thursday 12-1pm; in Spanish every Tuesday 6-7pm
 - Caring for Two Prenatal Class every first Thursday of the month from 12-1:30pm

