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**Danielle Pettit-Majewski, Director**

## **PRESS RELEASE**

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**Contact:** Chuck Dufano  
WIC/Maternal Health  
Coordinator  
**Phone:** 319-356-6042

### **Johnson County Public Health – Formula Safety**

The formula shortage is causing a lot of parents to worry. It can be scary to think you won't be able to feed your baby. Parents are hearing a lot of things about what they should do if they can't find formula. Below are answers to some common questions parents have about formula.

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

- Making homemade formula was common decades ago, but it is NOT a safe or recommended practice.
- The FDA oversees how approved formulas are made and stored.
  - The government inspects both the formulas and the manufacturing facilities regularly to be sure the rules are followed to avoid contamination and spoilage.
- The first year of life is a key time for your baby's brain and body to grow.
  - If your baby doesn't get enough of the important parts of infant formula—even for a few days or weeks—they can suffer long-term effects on their abilities to grow strong and do well in school.
  - Lack of these nutrients can lead to severe health problems and even death.
- Homemade formulas may have high or low levels of minerals which will cause health problems.
  - Homemade formulas may have a risk of contamination causing infections.
- Formula mixtures made from online or other resources may not have vital components, such as enough iron or vitamins for a baby.
  - They may have too much salt or other nutrients that your baby's kidneys and liver cannot handle in large amounts.
- Regular dairy products like cow milk or alternatives such as soy, hemp, almond, or goat milk are not designed with the right amount of very important nutrition sources including protein, iron, calcium, and vitamins that a baby needs.

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- Even if it seems like they have enough from the label, the chemical forms of the nutrition may not be easily absorbed by the baby's body.
- Certain ingredients may affect each other (such as calcium and phosphorus) in ways that is not ideal for things like bone growth.

### **Can I stretch the formula by adding extra water?**

- No. FDA-approved infant formula is designed for just the correct amount of nutrition as described by the label.
  - Adding extra water decreases and dilutes the nutrients and may cause serious growth problems or lead to serious health problems.

### **Is it ok to buy formula online made in other countries?**

- No. These formulas have not gone through FDA review and are not always safely shipped or stored correctly.
  - They are often very expensive and do not offer any benefits for babies that have been shown in research.
  - There is no scientific evidence that imported formulas are better for babies than what is on your grocery shelf in the formula aisle.

### **Can I use toddler formula for babies under one year old?**

- No, this is not a good idea, because the nutritional needs of a small infant is not the same as it is for a toddler.
  - Toddler formula doesn't have to be FDA reviewed like infant formulas is.
  - Look at the label on the formula and make sure it says that it is designed for infants.

### **What Else Can I Do?**

- Do NOT hoard infant formula.
  - Infant formula is available, however, definitely in shorter supply than usual.
  - Stores are likely only receiving partial shipments, so be prepared to shop for formula more frequently rather than hoarding.
- Consider use of available alternative name brand formula or other similar store brand formulas.
  - If you have any questions, ask your pharmacist or pediatrician to help you make sure that you are choosing the best formula for your baby.
- Consider concentrate and ready to feed preparations as well as powdered preparations.
- Call grocery stores to ask when their next shipment of formula will arrive.

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- If your infant currently uses a formula for a sensitive tummy, please keep in mind that these preparations are generally milk based formula.
  - If this formula is not available, consider the non-sensitive preparations and be aware that your baby may have more spit up or gas than usual.
  - Spit up and gas is not a concern as long as the baby continues to gain weight and continues normal growth.
  - Check with your baby's healthcare provider with questions.

Information for this posting came from the Iowa Department of Public Health and the healthychildren.org website [https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/formula-feeding/Pages/Is-Homemade-Baby-Formula-Safe.aspx?gclid=CjwKCAjwjtOTBhAvEiwASG4bCJ5UMvZbRkIfJyoSoxNalUaVLKdzC3Jw2DAC2JTbS\\_ItKVPNLMbiXRoCzpkQAvD\\_BwE](https://www.healthychildren.org/English/ages-stages/baby/formula-feeding/Pages/Is-Homemade-Baby-Formula-Safe.aspx?gclid=CjwKCAjwjtOTBhAvEiwASG4bCJ5UMvZbRkIfJyoSoxNalUaVLKdzC3Jw2DAC2JTbS_ItKVPNLMbiXRoCzpkQAvD_BwE)

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