



LIMITED SUPPLY OF INFANT FORMULA IN CANADA

Update, August 2023

www.canada.ca/infant-formula-shortage

Market disruptions caused by the closure of an important manufacturing facility in the United States for several months last year continue to affect the supply of infant formula in Canada.

- The supply of hypoallergenic formula reached critical levels in Summer 2022 and has since stabilized. For several months, hypoallergenic formula was only available through a pharmacist. These have now returned to shelves in retail stores and pharmacies.
- Supply constraints more recently affected regular infant formula. While the supply of liquid formulations has been relatively stable, some powders were often out of stock.

Hypoallergenic infant formula

- Extensively hydrolyzed formula and amino acid-based formula for babies with food allergies

Regular infant formula

- Non-hydrolyzed formula
- Partially hydrolyzed formula for babies with gastrointestinal discomfort

New regular infant formulas are starting to appear in retail stores and pharmacies across Canada.

These new products are imported from countries with high standards, like those in Canada, and they were reviewed by Health Canada. They are safe and provide all the nutrition infants need, even if they are new brands you haven't seen before.



Health Canada Santé Canada

Canada



What you can do

Do



- ▶ Consider different size packages or formats (powder, liquid concentrate, ready-to feed) of the infant formula brand you are currently using.
- ▶ Check the manufacturer's website for resources to locate a specific formula or contact their customer service.
- ▶ Try a different brand of formula if your usual product is unavailable. It is normal for infants to take time to adjust to a change in formula.
- ▶ Consult your healthcare provider if your infant requires a specialized formula.
- ▶ If you are combining bottle-feeding and breastfeeding maintain your breastmilk supply if you can.
- ▶ Start introducing homogenized cow's milk if your baby is between 9 and 12 months old.

Don't



- ▶ Make homemade infant formula. It can put your infant's health at serious risk.
- ▶ Dilute or water down your infant formula to extend its use. This reduces the nutritional content of the formula, and your infant may not get the nutrition they need.
- ▶ Buy more infant formula than you need.
- ▶ Use infant formula from unknown sources, such as online third parties.
- ▶ Use breast milk obtained online or directly from other individuals.
- ▶ Substitute infant formula for other beverages.



Resources when changing formula

These strategies can help your baby adjust to a new formula:

- Start by replacing a small amount of your baby's bottle with the new formula, and gradually increase that amount at each feeding. Make sure to follow the instructions on the label for each formula to prepare and store them appropriately.
- It's normal for infants to take time adjusting to a new formula. They may become gassy or fussy but this should improve in a few days.



Learn more:

From the Canadian Paediatric Society:

- [Caring for Kids](#)
- [Babies and gastroesophageal reflux disease](#)

From Health Canada:

- [Nutrition for healthy term infants: Recommendations from birth to 6 months](#)
- [Nutrition for healthy term infants: Recommendations from 6 to 24 months](#)

For many families, the cost of infant formula is an important consideration when trying a new formula. In some cases, the cost per feed of a liquid concentrate can be comparable to a powder, whereas ready-to-feed formula is generally more expensive.

This can help calculate the cost per feed:

- 1 can of 900 g powder = approx. 29 bottles of 237 mL (8 oz.)
- 1 can of 500 g powder = approx. 16 bottles of 237 mL (8 oz.)
- 1 box of 12 cans of 385 mL liquid concentrate = approx. 39 bottles of 237 mL (8 oz.)



What Health Canada is doing

Health Canada is taking this situation very seriously and has been working diligently to minimize the impacts of the limited supply of infant formulas on Canadian families.

Health Canada is working closely with manufacturers to increase the availability of formulas normally found on the Canadian market and to identify alternative products that can be imported from other countries.

Products eligible for temporary importation are listed under Health Canada's [interim policy](#).

They include formula sold in retail stores and pharmacies (hypoallergenic and regular formula) as well as products reserved for medical use (hospital nutrition products and products for patients with a hereditary metabolic condition).

These products are:

- Imported from countries that have quality and manufacturing standards comparable to Canada
- Nutritionally adequate and safe

Health Canada plays an important convener role to facilitate information sharing and promote a collaborative approach.

- Industry (manufacturers, distributors, retailers)
 - Monitoring of supply
 - Facilitating access to products imported under the interim policy
- Provinces and Territories
 - Fair and equitable distribution
 - Rapid identification of emerging issues
- Health Care Community
 - Information packages to help answer questions from concerned parents and support treatment decisions
 - Complementary messaging for families