



Memorandum:

To: Nurse Practitioners

From: NAPNAP Breastfeeding Education Special Interest Group (SIG)

Date: June 13, 2022

Subject: National Infant Formula Shortage: Guidance for Nurse Practitioners

This memo addresses the impact of the national infant formula shortage on breastfeeding and how nurse practitioners (NPs) can provide support and guidance to families about feeding babies safely and to ensure access to lactation support.

Impact of the National Formula Shortage on Breastfeeding

The national formula shortage has families anxious about how to safely feed their babies during the crisis. Many formula brands are out of stock in stores around the country with some communities being more affected than others. Human donor milk can be a solution to the baby food shortage but is costly and often restricted to premature infants in medical need. In the U.S., lack of paid family leave, poor workplace accommodations and limited access to lactation support makes it hard for many parents to establish and maintain breast milk supply. Parents who partially breastfeed often rely on infant formula to supplement human milk feedings and is safety net for infant nutrition until it fails. Due to the formula shortage, **parents are seeking guidance and support from NPs and other health care professionals to help them navigate the formula shortage crisis by increasing human milk offerings.**

NPs influence infant feeding practices and should provide the education and support parents need to initiate and continue breastfeeding during the formula shortage crisis. Parents of a newborn should be informed of the health benefits of breastfeeding and the risks of formula feeding including future infant formula shortages and contamination to assist parents in making an informed infant feeding decision. Parents who have recently stopped breastfeeding or are partially breastfeeding have options to re-lactate, transition to fully breastfeeding or to offer pasteurized human milk. NPs should work collaboratively with a skilled lactation consultant to assist parents in this process.

- Studies have found that despite the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) and the FDA recommendations against informal human milk sharing due to infectious disease and contamination risks, mothers are increasingly seeking informal human milk sharing as an alternative to infant formula (DiMaggio, Du & Porto, 2022). NPs should be aware of such practices and specifically ask how the parent is feeding the baby so that an informed feeding decision can be made with knowledge of the benefits and risks.
- **Note that the AAP warns against informal milk sharing due to safety risks while the Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM) urges families to carefully consider safety and to follow their guidelines if using human milk other than their own.** Parents should seek out a lactation consultant who can help with this process.



Parent Tip Sheet on Safely Feeding Babies During Formula Shortage

To assist the NP and families during the formula shortage, NAPNAP's Breastfeeding Education Special Interest Group (SIG) has developed a "Parent Tip Sheet" on how families can safely feed their babies. Information is provided for breastfeeding parents who are seeking guidance to increase human milk feedings. The handout is a compilation of the recommendations from American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP), Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine (ABM), International Lactation Consultant Association (ILCA), and The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infant, and Children (WIC).

Breastfeeding Support

NAPNAP's Breastfeeding Education Special Interest Group urges NPs to support infant food security through initiation and continuation of breastfeeding that includes ensuring access to lactation support, breast pumps and supplies, and donor milk. NPs who are International Board Certified Lactation Consultants (IBCLCs) can provide assistance for breastfeeding parents or inform of community resources for lactation support which is essential for breastfeeding success and duration.

For low income families, breastfeeding support is provided for WIC participants from peer counselors and certified lactation consultants through in-person, virtual consultations and group classes. WIC offers free access to video visits with a certified lactation consultant 24/7 through the Pacify app.

Advocating for Lactation Policies

The formula shortage crisis highlights lactation support obstacles and challenges for breastfeeding parents in initiating and continuing breastfeeding to provide food security for their babies. Solutions to major policy gaps in lactation are needed to provide the support parents need to reach their breastfeeding goals. Advocating for lactation support can influence policy makers to act and invest in infant food security through breastfeeding so that we can avoid another formula shortage crisis in the future.

Two policies are pending in Congress that would make a difference for breastfeeding families. Show your support for breastfeeding families through advocating for these policies.

- ***Establish a national paid family and medical leave program.*** The FAMILY Act (S. 248/H.R. 804) would ensure that families have time to recover from childbirth and establish a strong breastfeeding relationship before returning to work.
- ***Ensure all breastfeeding workers have time and space to pump during the workday.*** The Providing Urgent Maternal Protections (PUMP) Act (S. 1658/H.R. 3110) would close gaps in the Break Time for Nursing Mothers Law, giving 9 million more workers time and space to pump. [*Contact your legislators about the PUMP Act!*](#)

More information on advocating for policy through the U.S. Breastfeeding Committee: [The Four Pillars of Infant Nutrition Security in the United States](#)



Reference

DiMaggio, D. M., Du, N. D., & Porto, A. (2022). Nutritional and safety concerns of infant feeding trends. *Journal of Pediatric Gastroenterology and Nutrition*, 74(5), 668-673. doi: 10.1097/MPG.0000000000003401

More information on formula shortage

American Academy of Pediatrics

[With the baby formula shortage, what should I do if I can't find any?](#)

Academy of Breastfeeding Medicine

[ABM Statement on Shortage of Breastmilk Substitutes](#)

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

[Information for Families During the Infant Formula Shortage](#)

Department of Health and Human Services

[Information for Families During the Formula Shortage](#) (This site is also available in Spanish, Vietnamese, Haitian Creole, and Navajo)

USDA Food and Nutrition Service

[Request for Additional WIC Flexibility in Response to the Impact of COVID-19 and 2022 Abbott Recall on Nationwide Infant Formula Supply Chain Issues for Infants in Food Packages I and II – Maximum Monthly Allowance](#)

WIC

[WIC Infant Formula Recall Waivers](#)

International Lactation Consultant Association

[ILCA'S Statement on Commercial Infant Milk Formula Shortage](#)

United States Breastfeeding Committee (USBC)

[Infant Formula Recall and Shortage: Resources](#)

[The Four Pillars of Infant Nutrition Security in the United States](#)

[Advocacy Letter to Congress on Formula Shortage](#)

[Abbott Formula Supply Updates](#)