



## Don't feed homemade formula to babies; seek help instead

by Trisha Koriath, Staff Writer

Money is tight and you're low on baby formula. Should you try that homemade formula recipe you saw online?

The answer is: No.

The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) is warning parents not to feed homemade formula to infants. Babies should be fed only breastmilk or iron-fortified infant formula that has been prepared according to the directions on the package.

Homemade formula can harm infants. It might contain too many or not enough nutrients, according to AAP nutrition expert Steven Abrams, M.D., FAAP. Infant formulas are tested by the Food and Drug Administration for quality. They provide the right amount of protein, iron and vitamins that infants need.

Feeding babies homemade formula even for a few days or weeks can have lasting effects and put them at risk of getting sick, according to the AAP.

**Do not** feed infants the following:

- Homemade formula with ingredients like powdered cow's milk, raw milk or sugar; plain cow's milk; or milk substitutes like almond or soy milk. They do not have the balance of ingredients.
- Imported infant formula. It might have too much or not enough of some ingredients. If it was not stored or shipped correctly, it could be unsafe to use.
- Watered-down formula. It provides an unbalanced diet and can cause serious growth problems.

What should I do if I cannot afford formula?

- **Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC):** Mothers who qualify based on income can enroll in WIC to receive vouchers for formula, <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-how-apply>
- **Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP):** You can use your SNAP Electronic Benefits Transfer card (formerly called food stamps) to buy formula. If you are enrolled in WIC, you also might qualify for SNAP.
- **Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF):** This program offers temporary cash assistance to qualified families. Locate your state TANF program at <https://www.acf.hhs.gov/ofa/help>.

Where can I get help if I do not qualify for benefits?

- **Feeding America** is a nonprofit network of 200 food banks. Many provide free baby food, infant formula, diapers and other supplies. Visit <https://www.feedingamerica.org/find-your-local-foodbank>.
- **Dial 2-1-1** to be connected to a community resource specialist who can help you find local resources. The number can be dialed from almost anywhere in the U.S. You also can get help online at <http://www.211.org/services/food>.

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