



May 2, 2022

Dear Healthcare Provider:

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ohio WIC Program. As you may be aware, in February 2022, Abbott Laboratories recalled select products, including Similac, Similac Alimentum, and EleCare powdered infant formulas produced at a facility in Michigan. Of the recalled products, three formulas offered by the Ohio WIC Program were impacted — Similac Alimentum powder, EleCare, and EleCare Junior.

As a result, Ohio, as well as nearly every other state across the country, is experiencing infant formula shortages, either directly related to the Abbott recall and/or the COVID-19 pandemic. The specialty formulas mentioned above, as well as Similac Neosure and others, have been challenging for consumers to locate in stores/pharmacies, and some retailers report difficulty ordering from their suppliers.

The Ohio Department of Health (ODH) has been communicating directly with formula manufacturers, who assure us they are working to meet the demand and address the shortage. However, we are at a critical point where some of our WIC participants are having difficulty accessing appropriate formula to meet the nutritional needs of their babies.

Ohio's contracted vendor for standard milk and soy-based formula is Mead Johnson. Per federal WIC regulations, infants and children enrolled in WIC are required to have medical documentation for specialty formulas, including those listed below. **Given the current formula shortage, please be flexible by prescribing these alternatives to the recalled products using the *Ohio WIC Prescribed Formula and Food Request Form*. This will provide better opportunities for participants to locate and secure appropriate formula for their babies.** Additionally, the Ohio WIC Program is being as flexible as possible given current federal regulations, including issuing ready to feed formulas, when available, and larger container sizes for Nutramigen.

The Ohio WIC Program offers alternative hypoallergenic products on the Ohio WIC Formulary. These products include:

- Infants: Alfamino Infant, Gerber Extensive HA, Neocate Infant with DHA/ARA, Neocate Syneo Infant, Nutramigen, Nutramigen with/Enflora LGG, Pregestimil, Puramino DHA/ARA, and Similac Alimentum (ready to feed).
- Children: Alfamino Junior, Neocate Splash, Neocate Junior, Neocate Junior with Prebiotics, Nutramigen, Nutramigen w/Enflora LGG, Pregestimil, PurAmino Junior, and Similac Alimentum (ready to feed).

Additionally, we encourage WIC participants to call stores first to check availability and if the appropriate formula is not available, consider speaking with the store manager or pharmacy for assistance. Ohio WIC program staff are also available to help find products, communicate with formula representatives, and assist families on a case-by-case basis.

Your attention to monitoring the growth and development of infants is greatly appreciated. Like you, we are committed to the health and well-being of infants across Ohio. Thank you for your continued partnership and care of infants across Ohio as we continue to work on solutions to this issue that is impacting families in Ohio and our nation.

Please contact your local WIC clinic with any questions.

Sincerely,

Tabitha Jones-McKnight, DO

Tabitha Jones-McKnight, DO, MPH, FACOP, FAAP
Assistant Medical Director
Ohio Department of Health