

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## WESTCHESTER COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT ANNOUNCES RESOURCES FOR FAMILIES AMID INFANT FORMULA SHORTAGES

(White Plains, NY) – The Westchester County Health Department is urging residents **to never dilute/water down infant formula in an attempt to extend their supply, try to make formula at home, or use milk or toddler formula to feed infants.** While the FDA has announced plans to ease the national shortage of baby formula, it will take at least another six to eight weeks before an ample supply of formula is available on store shelves again.






Westchester County Department of Health Commissioner Dr. Sherlita Amler said: “I particularly caution parents that while it may be tempting to water down formula to stretch it out, it is not safe to do so. This practice can have severe consequences beyond malnourishment. As a pediatrician, I have personally seen an infant who suffered seizures due to an electrolyte imbalance caused by diluted infant formula.”

The Federal Government has issued the following links on their [webpage](#) to help families feed their babies:


### **Manufacturer Hotlines:**

- Gerber’s [MyGerber Baby Expert](#) : reach a certified nutrition or lactation consultant by phone, text, Facebook Messenger, web chat, or video call, who can help you identify a similar formula that may be more readily available.
- Abbott’s Consumer Hotline: call 1-800-986-8540
- Abbott’s urgent [product request line](#) : ask your OBGYN or your infant’s pediatrician to submit an urgent product request by [downloading and completing the form - PDF](#) 
- Reckitt’s Customer Service Line: call 1-800 BABY-123 (222-9123)



### **Community Resources**

- [Locate your nearest Community Action Agency \(CAA\)](#) . Your neighborhood CAA may be able to provide you with formula or connect you with local agencies that have formula in stock.
- United Way's [2-1-1](#) : dial 2-1-1 to be connected to a community resource specialist affiliated with United Way who may be able to help you identify food pantries and other charitable sources of local infant formula and baby food.
- [Feeding America](#) : call your local food bank to ask whether they have infant formula and other supplies in stock.
- [Human Milk Banking Association of North America](#)  (HMBANA): certain HMBANA-accredited milk banks are distributing donated breast milk to mothers in need; please note that some may require a prescription from a medical professional. Find an HMBANA-[accredited milk bank](#) .

### **WIC-Eligible Families**

- Contact your [local WIC](#)  office to identify or obtain additional sources of infant formula nearby.

### **General Guidance**

- Call your OBGYN or pediatrician to see if they have in-office samples or can suggest a similar formula that may be more readily available in stores and is nutritionally similar to your infant's typical formula.
- You should **not** water down formula, try to make formula at home, or use toddler formula to feed infants. Don't discard formula unless it is expired or is part of the recall. Check your formula's [lot code](#)  to see whether or not it was affected by the recall.
- You can find more guidance from the [American Academy of Pediatrics](#) .

Additionally, locally the Health Department is notifying the public about the New York Milk Bank in Valhalla. [The New York Milk Bank](#) is the first comprehensive nonprofit milk bank based in New York State where breast milk is collected from carefully screened donors, pasteurized and distributed to infants in need. Women looking to donate breast milk can also reach out to the New York Milk Bank to provide excess breast milk to babies in need.

Clients of the Health Department's WIC Program should contact their WIC clinic for support if their grocery store is out of their WIC infant formula. Yonkers WIC clients should call (914) 231-2510 and Port Chester WIC clients should call (914) 813-7244.

The Department of Health will continue to monitor the situation and communicate with families. For more information, support and WIC eligibility, visit the Health Department's website at

<https://health.westchestergov.com/>

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### **About Westchester County**

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just over a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth

County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting [www.westchestergov.com](http://www.westchestergov.com)

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