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## **Missouri WIC receives formula waiver from USDA** ***New options available for WIC participants impacted by formula recall***

JEFFERSON CITY, MO -- Missouri WIC announced Friday the proactive, voluntary recall of some powdered Similac, Alimentum, or EleCare formulas manufactured by Abbott. Today, Missouri WIC, the Department of Health and Senior Services Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, announces a new program waiver to help participants replace their previously redeemed, recalled formula, even if the Abbott brand is unavailable at the store.

Typically, WIC federal regulations prohibit retailers from permitting exchanges for authorized supplemental foods obtained with WIC benefits except for exchanges of an identical authorized supplemental food item (exact brand and size).

Missouri WIC [received a waiver to this requirement](#) to respond to shortages due to the voluntary recall. This waiver only applies to items being exchanged under the 2022 Abbott recall of certain powder formula and exempt formula during the COVID-19 supply chain disruptions.

This waiver states that WIC authorized retailers must treat all customers (including WIC participants) the same with regard to the recall exchange process of the formula and possible substitutes, which may include, but are not limited to:

- The same brand (Abbott) in a different product, physical form, or unit size,
- A substitute product in another brand,
- A store credit, or
- A cash refund.

Retailers are not required to verify whether a product was purchased with WIC benefits as part of the exchange process. The recall exchange process could vary with each WIC retailer since the exchange will be handled under each retailer's recall policy. WIC participants should talk to their retailer to learn how to complete the exchange. Additionally, Missouri WIC is working to ensure participants will be able to receive their formula benefits and appreciates their patience through this disruption.

Missourians interested in learning about the benefits of WIC may visit [wic.mo.gov](http://wic.mo.gov) or call TEL-LINK at 1-800-835-5465 to find the WIC local agency in their county.

Cow's milk or milk alternatives are not safe alternatives to infant formula. The CDC recommends waiting until babies are at least 12 months old to introduce cow's milk. Feeding an infant cow's milk may put him or her at risk for intestinal bleeding. It also has too many proteins and minerals for babies' kidneys to handle and does not have the right amount of nutrients. [View additional information from the CDC about dangers of feeding infants cow's milk or milk alternatives.](#)

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