

# Is Homemade Baby Formula Safe?

Some parents might be interested in making their own infant formula. But commercially prepared formula is the best and safest choice for babies who aren't breastfed.

Online formula recipes may look healthy and promise to be nutritionally complete, but getting too little — or too much — of important nutrients can cause serious problems for infants.

Commercially prepared formula must meet high nutrition and safety standards. It is hard — if not impossible — to meet these standards at home.

Problems with homemade formula include:

- **Contamination and infections.** Preparing formula at home can lead to contamination. Formulas that use unpasteurized raw cow milk or goat milk may cause infections, like *Salmonella* or *E. coli*.
- **Nutrient deficiencies.** Homemade formulas may not have enough important nutrients, including protein, vitamins, and minerals. For example, vegan and dairy-free formulas don't provide enough calcium, which can lead to feeding problems, irritability, and seizures.
- **Nutrient excesses.** Some formulas may have too much of some nutrients. For example, too much salt or protein can be hard on an infant's kidneys.
- **Poor growth and learning problems.** These can happen when a baby does not get proper nutrition over time.

## Why Might Some Parents Want to Make Formula?

Parents might want to make their own infant formula for a lot of reasons. They might be looking for healthy, natural, or organic options, while some families need to spend less on store-bought formula. For parents who can't or choose not to breastfeed, commercially prepared formula is the best choice. These formulas contain the right balance of protein, fats, carbohydrates, vitamins, and minerals and are made with safety in mind.

If you cannot afford formula, talk to your doctor or call 211 to help you find local resources.

Families may be eligible for assistance through:

- Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC)
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families

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