

June 10, 2022

Dear Health Care Providers:

Re: Shortage of Specialty Infant Formula

The Ministry of Health (Health) and the Saskatchewan Health Authority (SHA) are working with Health Canada to address concerns around the supply of specialty infant formula, specifically hydrolyzed infant formulas and amino acid-based formulas.

These hypoallergenic formulas are specifically designed for infants with allergies and certain medical conditions.

As you may know, there is a shortage of specialty infant formula following the shutdown of Abbott Nutrition's U.S.-based facility earlier this year. The facility has re-opened with a focus on producing specialty infant formula and it is anticipated that supply will gradually become available over the coming months.

In the meantime, to preserve supply of this specialty formula, **health care providers should only recommend specialty products for those infants with a clear medical indication.** In particular, please avoid recommending or prescribing amino acid-based formulas unless they are the only option for the specific medical indication. A working group facilitated by Health Canada has developed the attached guidance for reference.

Until further notice, please advise clients that they must access amino acid-based formulas through pharmacies.

We know that hearing about shortages can cause anxiety for parents and caregivers.

It is important to clarify that this shortage does not apply to non-specialized cow milk-based (regular) infant formulas.

Please assure parents that Health Canada is working to import these specialty products to reduce gaps in supply. Ministry of Health and SHA representatives are in contact with suppliers and Health Canada to determine supply levels and a process to get specialty products to those who need them. Further information will be shared as soon as possible.

Health Canada has published information to help guide families during the shortage of hypoallergenic infant formula. Healthcare professionals can use this information to facilitate their discussions with concerned parents and caregivers. This information along with a downloadable pdf is found at: canada.ca/infant-formula-shortage.

Dietitian expertise is available to help navigate feeding challenges and formula selection. If you are unsure how to refer to or connect with a dietitian in your area please contact Jacqui Hodge at 306-766-8637 or Jacqui.hodge@saskhealthauthority.ca.

Thank you for your patience and understanding as we all work to ensure infants who need the specialty formulas get the supply they need.

Sincerely,

Population Health Branch and Drug Plan Extended Benefits Branch
Saskatchewan Ministry of Health

Attachments