

The Virgin Islands Consortium

No Shortage of Baby Formula in USVI, Dept. of Health Says

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The V.I. Dept. of Health on Tuesday moved to ease concerns regarding the current shortage of baby formula badly affecting the U.S. mainland. The situation is so dire that the Food and Drug Administration on Monday took steps to allow more foreign baby formula in the U.S. by easing rules that had blocked shipments from overseas manufacturers.

On Tuesday, D.O.H. said that all U.S. Virgin Islands vendors that serve the Women, Infants and Children (WIC) Nutrition Program participants with powdered infant formula products are currently stocked with adequate supplies. "Some vendors are very well stocked, others less so," said Lorna Concepcion, director of the WIC Nutrition Program.

“There may be slightly less availability for some special formulas, but families have been able to get supplies to meet present needs.”

She added, “The Virgin Islands WIC Program is within the top 5 programs in the nation for having the most infants who are breastfed. Seventy-one percent of infants on WIC in the V.I. are breastfed, so the impact on our WIC population may not be as drastic. We are encouraging our moms to increase breastfeeds as needed. Additionally, there is help for anyone wishing to relactate, which is rebuilding your breastmilk supply that has been reduced or dried up after weeks or months.”

D.O.H. said that following [a recent recall](#) of baby formula, Abbott Labs, the manufacturer for the VI WIC contract formula, increased production of its primary contracted WIC formula Similac Advance, 12.4 oz powder at other FDA-registered facilities. VI store shelves have remained well stocked with liquid formula products since they were not impacted by the recall. Similac Advance 12.4 oz and Similac Sensitive 12.5 oz. powder formulas, the high demand WIC formulas in the VI, were originally among the recall products, but are now restocked on store shelves with unrecalled product that has been produced in these other unaffected Abbott FDA-registered facilities, D.O.H. said.

The health department further stated that the public is also reassured that work is ongoing by Abbott to improve the availability of special formula powder products produced by the impacted Sturgis manufacturing facility that remains unopened. These products include EleCare/EleCare Jr., Similac for Spit Up, and Similac Alimentum. Meade Johnson has also increased its production of Nutramigen, an alternate to Alimentum, which is also available on store shelves in the VI.

For more information about the powdered infant formula availability in the Virgin Islands contact Lorna Concepcion at lorna.concepcion@doh.vi.gov or call 340-718-1311 ext. 3748 or 3750.