

Healthy Kids, Strong Parents
WIC Works Wonders!

Questions and Answers on Transitioning to the New Bid Formulas

By Susan Greathouse, RD, MPH, IBCLC, WIC Nutritionist

In the last month, since the transition to the Ross brand formulas, several interesting issues have come up. The following FAQ might answer some of your questions. Take a look. If you still have questions, follow up with your coordinator or WIC nutritionist to find out how your agency is handling these situations.

Q1: At our clinic we heard from some WIC participants that the new bid formulas, especially Similac Sensitive, were not always available in October. What should we tell WIC participants if this continues to be a problem?

A1: Our vendor team, Vendor Advisory Committee and Ross vendor liaison have been working closely with our Oregon vendors to follow up on any situations where the new bid formulas were not fully stocked. From feedback in November, it seems that there were fewer concerns than in October, when we received 36 complaints of low stock. Remember, vendors are not required to carry a minimum shelf stock of Similac Sensitive, so it is possible that some stores may continue to run out of it.

- Please be sure to encourage WIC participants to first ask for the store manager whenever they can't find a particular formula, as most stores can get more product within 24- 48 hours. Due to theft issues, many stores keep formula locked up. If you don't see the formula or quantities you're looking for on the shelf, please talk to a manager
- Participants who have a formula other than Similac Advance or Isomil may want to call ahead and be sure the store has it in stock before they waste gas driving all over to find a formula.
- WIC staff should continue to enter complaints of inadequate stock into TWIST so the vendor team can track these.

Q2: We still have participants who want the Mead Johnson formulas. Is it OK to refer them to their local food bank for Enfamil?

A2: In general, it is probably not a good idea to refer participants to a local food bank for a particular formula, as food banks don't usually have much formula to begin with, and there is no guarantee that they would have Enfamil. Since this change is for the long run, it is better to work now with the participant and her baby to find an allowed formula that is tolerated by the baby.

Q3: What do we tell a participant who has already spent her vouchers for formula for this month, and she says the formula is not working for her baby?

A3: After you find out more information (How old is baby? What symptoms is baby having on new formula? Was baby transitioned slowly from old to new formula?) and it really does appear to be a formula intolerance, you will want to work with your WIC nutritionist to find a formula that is tolerated by baby. Unopened cans of new formulas can be returned and exchanged for different formula vouchers using the "Formula Exchange" function in the Food Package Assignment screen. Participants do not have to wait until the end of the month to change formulas. ([Cont. on P.2](#))

Formula Transition (Cont. from P.1)

Q4: What do I do if there are no food packages in TWIST that exactly match what the mom wants to exchange?

A4: Select a food package that is closest in quantity to the one needed. While App Support can enter a new food package in TWIST, most of these kinds of food packages would only be used once. Once a food package is entered in TWIST it stays there, making the system more difficult to use and food packages harder to find. During the change to Similac products, literally hundreds of 1 time use food packages had to be hand deleted. Please continue to call App Support for new medically-required food packages for participants with specific health issues. You may want to present the options to the participant, i.e. "This is the food package we can offer you in exchange for the formula you are bringing back. Would you like to go ahead and make that exchange?"

Q5: What do we tell a parent who refuses to try the appropriate new bid formula and wants us to continue to issue Enfamil Gentlease for her baby?

A5: Since you can no longer print vouchers for the standard Mead Johnson formulas, hopefully this makes the discussion clearer and easier for staff. You might try letting the participant know what her options are by saying, "Here's what I can do for you..." and then giving the participant a few options among what is allowed.

Q6: We had a mom who accidentally cashed her December vouchers in November. Now she wants to change her formula and when we went to do a formula exchange, TWIST did not allow us to replace the spent FI's. Shouldn't we be able to replace them?

A6: No. When a participant cashes vouchers before their "First Date to Use" date, the bank rejects those vouchers, which means the store doesn't get paid and the vouchers don't appear in TWIST. This is what prevents the Formula Exchange from working. The participant can exchange unspent vouchers or formula from vouchers spent during the current month

Q7: Some moms are reporting that their babies are having more diarrhea and fussiness with the change to the new formulas. What can we tell these moms?

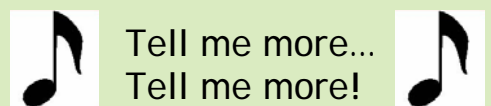
A7: The Mead Johnson and Ross infant formulas are very similar in composition, although there is some difference in the source of the fat between the two brands. If an infant is having loose stools on Similac Advance, try Similac Sensitive, which has a higher proportion of casein and may help to firm up stools.



Open-Ended Questions

In the latest *Dietary Risk Module* trainings that were offered regionally, CPAs statewide had the opportunity to begin practicing using open-ended questions.

The ever favorite "tell me more" is a great way of getting more information from somebody during a conversation.



It is no coincidence that the Pink Ladies used this key phrase to elicit exciting details from Sandy in GREASE!

Tell me more, tell me more, like does he have a car?

Tell me more, tell me more, was it love at first sight?