

Change happens! Here’s how you can use your participant centered services skills to address concerns about Abbott formula changes.

Change happens often in WIC. Every year, income guidelines change. TWIST functions, policies and procedures, and program materials change as well. Sometimes the formulas WIC provides change too.

Acceptance or resistance to change depends on a lot of factors. Think about the things that influence your reactions when you receive news about a change that impacts you. Here are some examples:



Factors:	Questions you may ask:
Timeliness of notification	Did I find out in enough time to think about and prepare for the change?
Reasons for the change	Why is this happening?
Accuracy of information	Can I be sure the information I’m being told is right?
Benefits and barriers	What is good or bad about the change?
Available options	What are my choices?
Ability to voice concerns	Will anyone listen to why I’m worried or upset?
Possibility to learn more	Who can I turn to if I have questions?



Feeding an infant is one of a parent’s most important tasks and as such, changes to formula may bring more intense emotion than other changes. A participant’s reactions to news about the upcoming changes to WIC’s approved formula list may depend on some of these same factors including the way news of the changes are presented to them.

Tips on what you can do

- Set the tone by being positive and helpful
- Talk with parents and caregivers in a pleasant and helpful way
- Use your best customer service skills
- Demonstrate your willingness to help
- Answer questions thoughtfully
- Acknowledge and normalize the concerns expressed
- Actively listen and reflect back their feelings and concerns
- Ask permission to share information
- Offer a menu of options or suggestions
- Take every opportunity to share what is happening with the impacted families
- Learn from your coworkers – listen to how they communicate about the changes
- Use the resources that are available to you (offer participant handouts, talk with your local WIC nutritionist, call the state with questions)

Words to try

Below are some examples of participant centered responses to consider using when talking with parents and caregivers.



Explore the parent or caregivers' concerns

Parent or caregiver requests Similac Sensitive for Fussiness and Gas or Similac Total Comfort:

Tell me what led you to decide on using Similac Sensitive (or Similac Total Comfort)?

- What formulas has your baby tried in the past? What happened with them?
- What has been your experience with using Similac Advance?
- Sounds like you have concerns about using Similac Advance. Tell me about what is going on with your baby right now. WIC is no longer able to provide those specific formulas. May I share some ideas about some other formula options?

Parent or caregiver tells you their baby is fussy, constipated, or spits up. Complete an assessment of what formula they are using and how it is prepared; discuss feeding time, general health status and infant cues that they observe with their infant.

- There are many reasons why a baby may be gassy or fussy. I'd like to learn more about your baby. Tell me about a typical feeding with your baby.

Some additional open ended questions to ask might include:

- What have you tried so far? How has that worked?
- How long has the baby been fussy (or spitting up or constipated)? When did it start? Does it happen with every feeding or only at certain times?
- What concerns do you have about the formula you are using (or were using)?
- Describe for me how your baby acts when they are fussy.
- What are the baby's dirty diapers like?
- What does it look like when your baby spits up? How often does that happen?
- How do symptoms change when using different types of the formula (concentrate vs. powder)?
- How do you feel about your baby's overall growth and development?
- What other behaviors are you seeing with your baby?

Timeliness of notification



Prenatal notification of formulas WIC offers:

- Promote breastfeeding as usual.
- If mom informs you that she does not plan to breastfeed, let her know that the formula WIC provides to healthy babies is Similac Advance.
- After breastfeeding is well established, if mom decides to supplement with formula, let her know that WIC provides Similac Advance.

Notification for parents or caregivers who currently receive vouchers for Similac Sensitive for Fussiness and Gas or Similac Total Comfort for their infant:

- Starting in May, WIC will no longer be able to provide the formula you are currently using. May I share some information about other options with you?
- We wanted to give you time to make this gradual change in formula. How might this affect you and your baby? What questions do you have about making this change?
- After this group session, I'd like to talk with any families who have infants receiving Similac Sensitive or Similac Total Comfort. I have some new information to share with you.

Notification to new participants who request a non-WIC formula for their infants:

- Our main WIC formula is Similac Advance. We would be happy to provide that for your infant.

Reasons for the change

- The company that makes the formula your baby is using has changed the recipe. They decreased the number of calories in it. It no longer meets the requirements that WIC sets for formulas, so we need to find another formula for your baby.
- WIC is required to contract with infant formula manufacturers for a rebate on formula. The formula you are currently on is no longer being rebated by the company.



Benefits

- Healthy babies who are on formula will usually do fine on a form of regular Similac Advance.
- Formula rebates help WIC save money which allows us to serve more people.

Assurances

- I can assure you that Similac Advance provides your baby with the same nutrition as the formula your baby is using now.
- It is developmentally normal for most healthy babies to go through fussy periods that they will grow out of. In the meantime, can I share some ideas about how to tell what your baby might be telling you when they are fussy?
- You are the expert on your baby and I am confident that together we can come up with a plan to make this transition as smooth as possible.
- I can understand your concerns. You want your baby to be happy and healthy. Making a change to a baby's formula can be scary.
- I am here to help.

Barriers/Accuracy of information

Parent or caregiver wonders if WIC is providing “cheap” or “inferior” formulas:

- WIC cares about you and your baby and we only provide formulas that provide all the nutrition your baby needs.
- All WIC formulas meet nutrition requirements. WIC tries to make sure we get the best price possible on the formulas we buy so that we can serve as many families as possible.

Parent or caregiver brings in medical documentation requesting a formula WIC cannot provide:

- I see that your doctor has suggested Similac Sensitive for your baby. This is not one of the formulas that we currently provide but I would be glad to talk with you about other options that are available.
- What did your doctor tell you about this formula? Let's see what other WIC formula options we have that will help meet your baby's needs.

Menu of options

Parents or caregivers may be concerned about having to change formulas, especially if the baby is doing fine on the formula they currently use. They may voice this concern in many different ways. Some may respond negatively, act frustrated, or may just ask a lot of questions. Using summaries and reflections may help.



- Let's talk about your concerns. Tell me more about what you are thinking.
- I can hear the concern in your voice. Tell me what is worrying you.
- There are several other options available. May I share them with you?
- Let's talk about some options.
- What were the reasons you chose to use that formula initially?
- What has your doctor said about selecting a formula?
- Could I share some tips for changing your baby to the new formula?
- There are many different methods for changing babies to a new formula. Some moms just offer the baby a bottle of the new formula and the baby does fine. Some babies notice the difference, so it might help to gradually switch them to the new formula. Would you like to know more about how to do that?
- It sounds like you are hesitant to try a new formula with your baby.
- You're worried that a change in formula will affect your baby's health.
- Your other formula has been working well and it is upsetting to have to make a change.

One option, especially for moms with newborns, is to return to more breastfeeding.

- Would you like to talk about increasing your breastfeeding?
- If you are interested in more breastfeeding, you can visit with our breastfeeding expert.

Possibility to learn more

- You can call our clinic if you have more questions. We are here to help.
- What questions do you have? I'm glad to answer them.
- I have some resources here that talk about these changes. Would you like to have a copy to take with you?
- How could you talk to your doctor about making this change?

Possible pitfalls

- Avoid telling parents or caregivers that they “have to” do anything. Use positive statements, offer options, and let them know what you can do to help.
 - Negative example: “You have to change to Similac Advance when you get May vouchers.”
 - Positive example: “We will be able to offer you Similac Advance instead of Similac Sensitive when WIC changes formulas in May.”
- When parents or caregivers receive a negative response, it can set up a difficult situation. They do not want to hear the word “no” or feel like you are unwilling to help. At times, your answer may need to mean “no” but there are better ways of letting them know how you can help. Tell them what you can do first.
 - Negative example: “I can't let you have any more vouchers for Similac Sensitive.”
 - Positive example: “I can print vouchers for Similac Advance for May. That will give you some time to plan for the change.”
- Sometimes a sign seems like an easy way to notify parents and caregivers of an upcoming change.
 - Staff should not hang up posters, flyers or other notices about formula changes in the clinic.
 - Not everyone needs to know about the changes.
 - Continue to promote breastfeeding and maintain a positive breastfeeding environment throughout the clinic.
- We want to help moms and their babies. We don't like disappointing them. We get frustrated with all the changes.
 - Know that your hard work is appreciated.
 - Give yourself a break. You are doing a great job.
 - Before you know it, this latest transition will be over.

