

Formulas and Fortifiers for Premature and Low Birth Weight Infants

Parents often ask their doctor for advice about brands of formulas. Here are some major brands and key differences. The Medical Home Portal does not endorse a specific brand. A dietician from the NICU can be consulted to help tailor nutritional components to a specific patient's needs.

Premature infant formula and human milk fortifiers are designed to meet the increased vitamin and mineral needs of the preterm infant consuming smaller volumes than the term infant consumes. Continuation of the preterm infant formula and human milk fortifiers in infants who weigh more than 2.5-3.0 kg will result in increased intakes of several vitamins, including vitamins A and D. Case reports of hypervitaminosis D suggest that these products should be discontinued when the infant is exceeding the recommended intakes for fat-soluble vitamins.

Name (manufacturer)	Proposed use
Enfamil Enfacare	Premature or low birth weight infants. Contains concentrated nutrients. 22 kcal/oz. Unflavored powder, ready to feed.
Enfamil Human Milk Fortifier	Premature or low birth weight, breast-fed infants. Contains extra nutrients. Unflavored powder packets to mix with expressed breast milk.
Enfamil Human Milk Fortifier Acidified Liquid	Premature or low birth weight breast-fed infants. Contains extra nutrients including more protein than in the human milk fortifier powder formulation. Unflavored liquid to mix with expressed breast milk.
Enfamil Premature	Premature and low birth weight infants. In 20-, 22-, 24-, and 30-kcal/oz formulations with normal or low iron options and a high-protein, 24-kcal/oz option. Unflavored, ready to feed.
Gerber Good Start Premature Formulas	Premature infants. In 20-, 22-, 24-, and 30-kcal/oz formulations plus a 24 kcal/oz with a high protein option. Contains partially hydrolyzed whey proteins and 40% medium chain triglycerides oils. Unflavored, ready to feed.
Liquid Protein Fortifier	Premature and low birth weight infants. Extensively hydrolyzed protein fortifier to add to human milk or formula for supplemental protein. Unflavored liquid.
Similac Expert Care Neosure	Premature infants. 22 kcal/oz. Unflavored powder.
Similac Human Milk Fortifier	Premature or low birth weight, breast-fed infants. Contains extra nutrients. Unflavored powder packets or concentrated liquid to mix with breast milk.
Similac Human Milk Fortifier with Hydrolyzed Protein	Premature or low birth weight, breast-fed infants. Contains extra nutrients and hydrolyzed proteins. Unflavored concentrated liquid to mix with breast milk.
Similac Special Care with High Protein	Premature and low birth weight infants who need extra protein to help support growth until they reach 3600 grams. 24 kcal/oz. Unflavored, ready to feed.
Similac Special Care with Iron	Premature or low birth weight infants until they reach 3600 grams. In 20-, 22-, 24-, and 30-kcal/oz formulations Unflavored, ready to feed.

Source: Information compiled from manufacturer websites.



Although formulas must meet the requirements of the Infant Formula Act, manufacturers' marketing claims often are not supported by clinical evidence or evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration. [[Belamarich: 2015](#)] FDA approval is only required for claims regarding formulas and their relationship to medical conditions, claims that do not reference conditions or disease (e.g., probiotics support digestive health) do not need FDA approval. [[Abrams: 2015](#)] Insufficient evidence shows that removing or reducing lactose, using hydrolyzed or soy protein or adding pre-/probiotics to formula benefits infants with fussiness, gas, or colic. [[Thomas: 2010](#)]