



Infant Nutrition Council of America Resource Guide for Retailers on Infant Formula Returns

The Infant Nutrition Council of America¹ (INCA) is committed to providing safe and high quality products to consumers. For infant formula, which is often a sole source of nutrition for a vulnerable population, it is critical that formula manufacturers and retailers have policies and procedures in place for the proper handling of returned infant formula products to ensure their safety and quality.

Returned infant formula has been out of the control of both the manufacturer and retailer. As a result, returned infant formula represents a risk to the health and safety of infants due to the possibility of loss of product quality or potential for tampering. INCA offers the following recommended best practices for retailers handling infant formula that is returned and/or otherwise deemed unsaleable.

- Purchase infant formula exclusively from manufacturers or manufacturers' authorized wholesalers.
- Ensure staff routinely rotate and inspect infant formula at shelf to ensure that all product is in good condition and within its use-by date. Infant formula that is past its "use-by" date must be removed from store shelves.
- Ensure staff are aware of proper procedures for handling infant formula returns. Returned infant formula should never be re-shelved or re-sold.
- Process all infant formula unsaleables through approved reclamation centers without regard to the type of manufacturer or reimbursement method.
- Consider adopting best practices for customer returns when feasible and appropriate for the specific retailer/retailer location. Suggested best practices include the following:
 - Document customer returns and follow the store/corporate policy for record keeping.
 - Follow the store/corporate policy to keep any video recordings of the customer service return area.
 - Follow the store/corporate policy to train appropriate new employees on the proper handling of infant formula returns, and conduct annual training on infant formula returns for relevant employees.
 - Post signage at customer service to remind relevant employees not to return infant formula to store shelves.
 - Designate an area for customer returns.
 - Follow the store/corporate policy to designate appropriate staff to supervise/audit the returned goods process to ensure the proper storing and handling of distressed, damaged, and returned products.

An infant formula manufacturer recall / withdrawal may be handled using an alternate method of return based on [guidance](#) from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration. In the case of infant formula unsaleables, INCA members request the ability to review customer reclamation records for infant formula.

Following these best practices will help ensure infant formula products remain safe and of the highest quality and protect the health and well-being of the babies who consume them.

Last updated August 2020

¹ INCA is an association of manufacturers and marketers of formulated nutrition products, whose member companies manufacture over 95% of the infant formula that is consumed in the U.S. INCA members are Abbott Nutrition, Gerber Products Company, Perrigo Nutritionals, and Reckitt Benckiser.