

SoyConnection

By U.S. Soy

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Volume 34, Issue No. 4 | Fall 2026

Early Life Nutrition: Science, Safety, & Clinical Guidance



NEW INSIGHTS INTO SOY INFANT FORMULA AND LONG-TERM HEALTH

By Aline Andres, PhD, RD

Counseling Tips:

- 1. Help families feel secure in their feeding choice.** Reinforce that breastfeeding is the recommended feeding method while reassuring parents who are choosing alternate options that soy infant formula supports healthy growth and development.
- 2. Address concerns about soy isoflavones (often referred to as phytoestrogens) with supporting evidence.** Explain that long-term prospective research found no differences between infants fed soy infant formula and those fed dairy-based infant formula in growth, reproductive development, pubertal timing, or overall cognitive function through adolescence.
- 3. Reassure families about healthy growth and development.** Emphasize that infants fed soy formula demonstrate normal growth trajectories for bone and body composition comparable to those fed cow's milk formula.
- 4. Put early developmental differences into perspective.** Relative to formula feeding, breastfeeding was associated with some early neurodevelopmental advantages, but these differences did not result in differences in overall cognitive performance later in childhood.
- 5. Use the totality of evidence to guide recommendations.** The Beginnings Studies provide some of the strongest long-term, real-world evidence available to support informed, individualized discussions about infant feeding choices.



INFANT FORMULA THROUGH THE YEARS: SCIENCE, SAFETY, AND CLINICAL PRACTICE

By Michelle M. Bohan Brown, PhD, RDN

Counseling Tips:

- 1. Reassure families that infant formula feeding can support healthy growth.** When breastfeeding is not possible, insufficient, or not the family's choice, guide caregivers toward safe, nutritionally appropriate feeding options based on the infant's individual needs.
- 2. Help parents understand that today's infant formulas are science-based.** Modern formulas are carefully designed using decades of research on human milk composition, infant nutrition, growth, and development, and are rigorously evaluated for safety and nutritional adequacy.
- 3. Address formula safety concerns with evidence.** Explain that all infant formulas sold in the U.S. must meet FDA requirements for safety, nutritional quality, manufacturing, labeling, and ongoing monitoring, regardless of where they are produced.
- 4. Promote safe formula preparation and storage.** Encourage caregivers to prepare formula exactly as directed by the manufacturer or healthcare provider and avoid diluting formula or breast milk, which can compromise nutritional adequacy and infant safety.
- 5. Individualize formula recommendations.** Counsel families that infant formulas are available to meet a variety of medical, nutritional, cultural, and lifestyle needs, and recommend the option that best supports the infant's health while respecting family preferences.



SURVEY INSIGHTS: BRIDGING THE GAP IN SOY & CHILD NUTRITION COUNSELING

By Kaci Vohland, MS, RDN, LD

Counseling Tips:

- 1. Ask what matters most to families.** Explore parents' priorities, including nutrition, cost, dietary preferences, and medical needs, to guide shared decision making about child nutrition.
- 2. Individualize formula recommendations.** Reinforce that while breastfeeding is recommended when possible, soy infant formula is a safe, nutritionally complete option for healthy-term infants when clinically indicated or preferred by the family.
- 3. Respond to hormone concerns with evidence.** If parents have questions about soy and hormones, explain that decades of clinical research consistently demonstrate that soy infant formula supports normal growth and development, with no evidence of adverse effects on endocrine function, sexual maturation, or reproductive health in healthy-term infants.
- 4. Address common misconceptions when they arise.** Recognize that many parents encounter conflicting information about soy online and be prepared to provide evidence-based answers that help distinguish myths from established science.
- 5. Encourage questions and ongoing dialogue.** Invite parents to discuss concerns and reassure them that child nutrition and infant feeding decisions can be revisited as their children's needs and circumstances evolve.