

BBB: Baby formula shortage leads to potential scams

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Milwaukee, Wis. – Shortages in the supply of baby formula are leading new moms to find other ways of finding the much-needed item – and risking themselves to potential online scams. The [U.S. Food and Drug Administration](#) announced it is taking proactive measures to increase supply to help ease the shortage.

According to the [2021 BBB Scam Tracker Risk Report](#), online shopping scams are the riskiest. With the current supply issues on many items, including formula, scammers are watching.

How it works

An ad, post, or social media group posts they have baby formula available. The buyer contacts the seller via chat or direct message, showing photos of the cans available. The buyer makes a payment through a peer-to-peer platform such as [PayPal \(a BBB Accredited Business\)](#) or [Venmo \(a BBB Accredited Business\)](#), but the formula never arrives.

Signs of a potential online purchase scam include:

- Positive reviews on the website that have been copied from honest sites or created by scammers. Be aware that some review websites claim to be independent but are funded by scammers. Check [BBB.org](#).
- No indication of a brick-and-mortar address or the address shows on a Google map as a parking lot, residence, or unrelated business than what is listed on the website.
- Misspellings, grammatical errors, or other descriptive language that is inconsistent with the product.

- The seller advertises on a social media site and is communicative until the payment is made. Once the payment clears, they are unreachable.

Check out the website before making a purchase:

- Visit [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org) to check a business's rating and BBB accreditation status. Impostors have been known to copy the BBB seal. If it is real, clicking on the seal will lead to the company's BBB profile on [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org) – check the domain of the URL.
- Conduct an internet search with the company name and the word “scam.” This may locate other complaints about the site.
- Make a note of the website where the order is placed. Take a screenshot of the item ordered, in case the website disappears, or a different item is received in the mail than what was advertised.
- Credit cards often provide more protection against fraud than other payment methods.
- **Think before you click.** Be especially cautious about email solicitations and [online ads on social media sites](#).

Report suspected online shopping fraud to:

- **Better Business Bureau** - file a complaint at [BBB.org](https://www.bbb.org) or report a scam at [BBB.org/scamtracker](https://www.bbb.org/scamtracker).
- **Federal Trade Commission (FTC)** - file a complaint at reportfraud.ftc.gov or call 877-FTC-Help.
- **National Intellectual Property Rights Coordination Center** – report intellectual property and counterfeiting violations to iprcenter.gov/referral/view-
- **Internet Crime Complaint enter (IC3)** – file a complaint at ic3.gov/complaint-
- **Canadian Anti-Fraud Centre** - file a report at antifraudcentre--centrefraude.ca or call 1-888-495-8501.
- **Facebook** – report ads that violate Facebook's policies by clicking the *** next to an ad to go to facebook.com/business/help.
- **Instagram** – report copyright infringement or other policy violations at help.instagram.com.
- **Amazon** – report suspicious activities and web pages at Amazon.com.
- **Google** – report scams at Google.com.
- **PayPal** – call (888) 221-1161 to speak with a live person instead of using an

automated system if you receive an item that is not as advertised.

- **Credit card company** - Call the phone number on the back of the credit card to report the fraud and request a refund.

For more information

- See [BBB's online shopping resource page](#).
- Read more [tips for shopping online](#).
- Visit our [consumer HQ](#).