

Reading a formula label

What the words that worry people actually mean.

THE ONES PEOPLE ASK ABOUT

	What it is	Does it matter?
Corn syrup solids	Glucose polymers replacing lactose	Legal and safe in the US; would fail EU rules for standard Stage 1. Not the same as high-fructose corn syrup.
Maltodextrin	Another glucose polymer, similar role	Same picture. Adds sweetness and changes stool pattern.
Palm oil	Supplies palmitic acid, which breast milk carries	Safe. Firms stools and slightly reduces calcium absorption. sn-2 palmitate is the structured form that avoids this.
Sucrose	Plain sugar, listed as "sugar"	Appears on 8 of the 111 formulas we track, all US-registered. Worth noticing because few people expect sugar on an infant formula label.
Carrageenan	A seaweed thickener	Banned in EU infant formula, permitted in US liquid formulas. No formula in this Atlas contains it.

The order matters: ingredients are listed by weight. If the first carbohydrate named is not lactose, that is the single most informative thing on the label.

Not medical advice. Consult your pediatrician before changing your baby’s formula.
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