Seven more children died after consuming baby formula produced at contaminated Abbott Labs factory in Michigan

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According to newly released documents, nine children have died since 2021 after consuming powdered baby formula produced by Abbott Labs at its pediatric nutritionals factory in Sturgis, Michigan, seven more than had been previously acknowledged by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

The document also revealed that consumers submitted to the FDA 25 complaints that were categorized as "life-threatening illness/injury" and 80 instances of "non-life-threatening illness/injury."

The existence of the documents was reported in the *Washington Post* on Friday. The *Post* said that the FDA confirmed that it had received seven additional reports of children dying or being made sick after they drank formula made at the Sturgis factory.

Previously, the government regulatory agency and Abbott Labs had only revealed that four children became ill and two died from bacterial infections beginning in September 2021, and all of whom had consumed baby formula made at the Sturgis facility.

As they have done throughout the catastrophic baby formula shortage and shutdown of the unsanitary Sturgis factory, both the FDA and Abbott Labs are claiming after the fact that the source of the infections that sickened and killed nine infants is unknown and could not be determined. As the *Post* article states, "In all nine fatalities, the agency was unable to identify the source of the infection."

The *Post* then repeats without comment the justifications given for the joint cover-up by the largest baby food manufacturer in the US and the FDA by saying, "there was not enough leftover formula to test" and that, of the babies who died from Cronobacter infections, "genomic sequencing turned up different strains than what was discovered at the Sturgis plant during an inspection this spring."

The latest devastating disclosures were initially published by eFoodAlert and food safety expert Phyllis Entis on Wednesday. The details of the additional instances of children dying after consuming Abbott Labs products were obtained by Entis through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request.

The eFoodAlert report says, "Between December 1, 2021, and March 3, 2022, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) received nine (9) reports of infant deaths among babies who were fed powdered infant formula manufactured by Abbott Nutrition in Sturgis, Michigan."

The website says that the infant deaths "were included in a list of 128 consumer complaints supplied to eFoodAlert by the FDA" in response to the FOIA request. The two deaths previously acknowledged by the FDA were caused by Cronobacter sakazakii, a bacterium that is known to be fatal in infants.

The eFoodAlert report says that the other seven deaths were "reported to the FDA via the agency's consumer complaint system," and that two of those reports "mentioned Salmonella in the complaint description." Salmonella was mentioned in 17 other illness complaints.

The symptoms suffered by the infants "were mostly consistent with gastrointestinal infection," including, "fever (31 babies), vomiting (42 babies), diarrhea (47 babies), and blood in stool (6). Most babies suffered from multiple symptoms," according to the website.

Significantly, eFoodAlert states, "Every one of the sick babies was fed an Abbott powdered formula," then

goes on to list under the heading “In Memoriam” the case numbers, filing dates and causes of death. One infant arrived at the emergency room in cardiac arrest, and another had swollen organs and trouble breathing.

Among the Abbott Labs products that these babies consumed were Similac Pro-Total Comfort, Similac Advance, Similac Total Comfort Easy-to-Digest Gentle Protein & Prebiotics, Similac PM 60/40 and EleCare. The eFoodAlert website concludes its review of these painful and tragic deaths with “May they rest in peace.”

The official response of the FDA was to stick to its original report of four cases and two deaths since the fall of 2021. A statement from the agency said, “Based on FDA’s thorough review and investigation of all 128 consumer complaints reported to the agency and recently released to media in response to a FOIA request, only four complaints could be included in the case series associated with the Abbott Nutrition investigation.”

A statement from Abbott Nutrition on Friday said that no causal relationship had been established between its products and any of the reported deaths. “Abbott conducts microbiological testing on products prior to distribution and no Abbott formula distributed to consumers tested positive for Cronobacter sakazakii or Salmonella.”

The company furthermore claimed that the product tested by Abbott and the FDA “during the inspection of the facility came back negative for Cronobacter sakazakii and/or Salmonella. No Salmonella was found at the Sturgis facility.”

However, neither the agency nor the company explained why it did not disclose the scope and scale of the complaints it received in the period between December 2021 (when the FDA said that it was going to inspect the Sturgis facility) and February 2022 (when a product recall was launched). The plant was “voluntarily shut down” by the company.

In a statement to the *Post*, Phyllis Entis said, “There appears to have been no sense of urgency within the FDA to address a deteriorating situation in a production facility that was, in many cases, the sole source of nourishment to a vulnerable population.”

The callous and indifferent response of the Biden administration to both the deaths of children from infection after consuming Abbott Labs products and the intensifying baby formula shortage across the country is a measure of the priorities of the entire ruling elite. Preoccupied with the war against Russia in Ukraine, a White House official was quoted by *Politico* as saying there were “a million crises going on” and the baby formula crisis “just wasn’t elevated to a top-level crisis.”

Under these conditions, the consent decree signed between the U.S. Department of Justice and Abbott Labs, which relieves the company of any liability in the contamination of baby formula in exchange for the reopening of the Sturgis facility, can only be understood as a further cover-up of the conditions in the factory.

There is every reason to be concerned that the reopening of the Sturgis plant has been fast-tracked by the company for the purpose of restoring its sales figures under conditions of increased demand and higher retail prices. Everything done throughout the crisis by Abbott Labs, the number one producer of baby formula in the US, has been motivated by the financial interests of its multimillionaire executives and billionaire investors. No one can accept that the conditions reported by the whistleblower at the Sturgis facility have been addressed or that the FDA is going to look after the health and well-being of families in need of baby formula.