

# A Can Of Formula And A Pack Of Marlboros, Please

Yesterday we made a trip to our second-closest Walmart, and that location keeps their baby formula behind the counter, with the cigarettes. I guess formula theft is rampant, at least at that Walmart location. The cashier said something about it being used to make drugs, but I don't know if that's just her own hypothesis or if it's true, but it doesn't really make sense to me. Whatever the reason, it's so much more inconvenient for us regular shoppers. Not only do I have to remember to get the formula on the way out, but we have to stand in a special line since only the one checkout lane has the formula. Then you have to be clear on which kind you want, and you have to make sure the cashier knows what you're talking about because there are at least 10 varieties. It would stink to come home and find that you were given the wrong kind or had forgotten the formula altogether, which did happen to me last time I shopped at that Walmart location. Anyone who has or has had little kids can understand how crazy kids can get in the checkout line. Not only is it boring (especially at Walmart, where it often takes forever and a day also), but they're nice enough to stock both sides of the aisle with plenty of tempting goodies for kids, conveniently all at eye level. So the kids often are going crazy in the checkout line, and now the weary parent is expected to remember they still need their formula (and probably cigarettes, the way the shopping trip is going!) and to make sure they get the right kind of formula. It's a stupid set-up, and I really hope they don't implement this change at my local Walmart where I do most of my shopping. I have a suggestion that would make things a wee bit easier if they insist on keeping the formula behind the counter. In the baby section of the store, have papers with bar codes on them corresponding to the different types of formulas. That way,

we can just grab the slip we need and put it in our cart, eliminating the need for remembering to get the formula later or confusion with the cashier. This system works well when you buy large items, like swingsets, so why not try it with formula?

And while we got on the subject of drugs with the cashier, she told us an interesting tidbit about Walmart's cash registers. It seems they are trained to recognize the combination of supplies one needs to create a meth lab. If someone buys this combination of items, the register will alert the employee. Now I'm as opposed to meth labs as the next person, and I certainly don't want them in my neighborhood, but when the Walmart cash register is programmed to tell you what *not* to buy... I think that's a little too much. Big brother, here we come...