



United States Department of Agriculture

Research, Education, and Economics
Agricultural Research Service
National Agricultural Library

May 7, 2012

SUBJECT: WIC Mailing

TO: Regional, State and Local WIC Offices

FROM: Debra R. Whitford
Director, Supplemental Food Programs Division
Food and Nutrition Service

Shirley King Evans, Acting
Nutrition and Food Safety Program Leader
National Agricultural Library

On March 10th the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' (DHHS) Office of Women's Health coordinated and observed National Women and Girls HIV/AIDS Awareness Day. As part of this Awareness Day, organizations and people across the country are asked to increase the knowledge of HIV/AIDS among women and girls and improve access to care. This issue is important to the population the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) serves. The WIC Program plays an important role in improving the health of low income, nutritionally at-risk prenatal and postpartum women, infants and children by providing healthy supplemental foods, nutrition education and encouraging regular prenatal and well-child health care.

For child-bearing women at-risk for HIV and those infected with the virus, the support and care needed to ensure healthy birth outcomes is increased. Women can pass HIV to their babies during pregnancy, while the baby is being delivered, or through breastfeeding. A mother who knows early in her pregnancy that she is HIV-infected has more time to make important decisions that may help prevent mother-to-child-transmission of HIV and learn how best to keep herself healthy during her pregnancy. By communicating to pregnant women the importance of early testing during pregnancy as well as early and routine health care and good nutrition, WIC staff can make a difference in the lives of both mother and baby.

The need for education, support and referrals in WIC does not end after baby comes. Mom will need guidance in how best to feed her baby given her HIV status. **The DHHS Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that HIV-infected women do not breastfeed.** In the United States, the safest way for HIV infected mothers to feed their infants is to give replacement feedings, most often by feeding infant formula.

Enclosed in this mailing are resources to assist you in the area of early HIV testing and care of HIV-infected women including:

- HIV Facts for WIC Staff (includes list of resources on the back).
- Facts for HIV-Infected WIC Participants.
- Materials from the CDC campaign: *One Test. Two Lives.* Additional materials can be ordered from CDC.

An informational PowerPoint, "Preventing Perinatal HIV Transmission: The Role of WIC" developed by the François-Xavier Bagnoud Center of the University of Medicine & Dentistry of New Jersey, funded in part by the CDC, is also available on the WIC Works Resource System (WWRS). wicworks.nal.usda.gov

We hope you find these materials helpful to your education and outreach efforts. Visit the WWRS for additional materials. Let us know what else we can do to help you help WIC! Contact the WWRS team by phone: 301-504-6047, by fax: 301-504-6409, or by email: wicworks@ars.usda.gov.



National Agricultural Library • Public Services Division
10301 Baltimore Avenue • Beltsville, MD 20705-2351

An Equal Opportunity Employer