



Breastfeeding Promotion & Support Peer Counselors: Vital to the New Food Packages

The new WIC food packages were designed to support and protect breastfeeding. Currently, over 90% of Utah WIC moms initiate breastfeeding! This success suggests that moms want to breastfeed their babies. Unfortunately, by 6 months postpartum less than 20% are exclusively breastfeeding. A Peer Counselor's primary role is to provide mom to mom breastfeeding support and encouragement. A Peer Counselor can make a difference by helping a mom remember the breastfeeding "how to" basics, build her confidence that she can breastfeed exclusively, and support her during the critical times of the first six weeks after delivery.

The new food packages support breastfeeding by:

- ❖ Not routinely providing formula to breastfed infants in the first month of life
- ❖ Limiting the amount of formula offered to a partially breastfed infants
- ❖ Offering more food benefits to partially breastfeeding moms (whose infant do not exceed the amount of formula in the partially breastfeeding infant package)
- ❖ Providing additional food benefits to breastfeeding moms and babies. Exclusively breastfeeding dyads receive the most food benefits.

WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselors can help moms successfully breastfeed. Peer Counselors should educate moms on how to recognize the signs that baby is getting enough milk. This support will assist WIC participants in continuing exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months of life!



Peer Counselors can help support the new food packages by:

- ❖ Educating her prenatally. Discuss the basics, the "How To" of breastfeeding
- ❖ Discussing the mother's concerns, and helping her to establish her breastfeeding goals
- ❖ Helping her build her confidence. To successfully establish milk supply, encourage moms to exclusively breastfeed and not use formula during the first 4 – 6 weeks
- ❖ Sharing "how to know her baby is getting enough breastmilk" concepts so that she does not resort to formula/artificial baby milk
- ❖ Encouraging those moms using partial breastfeeding packages to breastfeed more, use less formula, and stay on the partially breastfeeding packages, and to not use more formula
- ❖ Reinforcing that the breastfeeding packages and extra food benefits are incentives to moms and babies in helping them continue breastfeeding