

Breastfeeding Promotion and Support and the New WIC Food Packages



The WIC food packages are changing to better meet the nutritional needs of WIC participants. The new food packages align with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and infant feeding practice guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics. The new food packages better promote and support the establishment of successful long-term breastfeeding and strengthen WIC's breastfeeding promotion efforts.

The new food packages*:

- Provide incentives for initiation and continuation of breastfeeding.
 - Fully breastfeeding mothers receive more variety and larger quantities of foods, including a \$10 cash-value voucher for fruits and vegetables.
 - Fully breastfed infants receive larger quantities and more types of baby food.

- Minimize early supplementation with infant formula to help mothers establish milk supply.
 - No routine issuance of infant formula in birth month to breastfeeding infants.
 - Compared to the previous food packages, partially breastfed infants receive less formula to allow mothers to feed more breastmilk to their infants.

- Recognize differences in nutritional needs of infants based on age and feeding practice.
 - Complementary infant foods are introduced at 6 months of age.
 - New Food Packages distinguish between the fully breastfed, partially breastfed, and the fully formula fed infant.

<p>The new changes help WIC actively promote and support breastfeeding through the food packages it provides to participants.</p>
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EMPHASIS ON BREASTFEEDING SUPPORT THROUGH THE NEW WIC FOOD PACKAGES

The new food package changes reflect the Institute of Medicine's comprehensive approach in recommending revisions to the food packages for breastfeeding mothers and their infants, and are based on a thorough consideration of scientific research and public comments on how to promote and support breastfeeding in WIC.

Reasons for the emphasis on breastfeeding in revising the WIC food packages:

- Breastfeeding provides substantial short- and long-term health benefits for the infant and the mother.
- Breastfeeding objectives are part of Healthy People 2010 and WIC participants lag behind the general population in progress toward meeting those objectives.
- The Surgeon General issued the U.S. Health and Human Services Blueprint for Action on Breastfeeding in 2000, introducing it with the statement, "Breastfeeding is one of the most important contributors to infant health...."
- WIC has a legislative mandate to promote breastfeeding as the best method of infant nutrition.

What support, other than the food package, does WIC provide to breastfeeding moms? WIC is committed to assisting mothers in establishing and continuing to breastfeed in the critical weeks after birth and beyond. Federal WIC regulations contain provisions to encourage women to breastfeed and provide appropriate support for breastfeeding. These provisions include breastfeeding education to pregnant women and for breastfeeding moms, peer counseling support, access to lactation experts, and breastfeeding aids such as breast pumps.

** Refer to the full regulation at www.fns.usda.gov/wic for the complete provisions and requirements for foods in the new WIC food packages.*