



**Frequently Asked Questions
Breastfeeding Promotion & Support
The New Food Packages, Vol 1: “The First Month”**

- Q:** Why are we limiting formula for partially breastfed infants to one can for the first month?
- A:** Data show that the first four-six weeks is crucial to support exclusive breastfeeding. To help moms establish milk supply, WIC will not routinely provide formula to breastfed babies during this time. Limiting formula issuance will help moms feel confident about exclusive breastfeeding.
- Q:** I heard that issuing one can of formula is standard in the first month for partially breastfed infants. Is this right?
- A:** No. WIC supports breastfeeding and all breastfeeding moms need to be individually assessed. ONLY in the rare situation that a mom is having problems, the nutritionist can issue a maximum of one can to help the mom successfully breastfeed and return to exclusive breastfeeding.
- Q:** When would I issue one can of formula during the first month to a breastfeeding mom and infant?
- A:** This situation needs to be assessed individually by the CPA/Lactation Educator. Observing latch, determining her feeding pattern, and getting an accurate weight check are part of that assessment. Providing appropriate counseling and follow up and the use of a hospital grade electric breast pump may also be part of the strategies used. Protecting/increasing the milk supply is crucial the first two weeks. Issuance of one can is to be used in conjunction with those other strategies and mom needs to be informed of providing only the amount that is needed to adequately supplement the baby’s nutritional intake while correcting the breastfeeding problems.
- Q:** If a breastfeeding mother wants two cans of formula for her infant less than one month of age, how should I handle this?
- A:** Partially breastfed infants cannot get more than one can of formula in the first month. An infant can only be issued two cans of formula if baby gets switched to the fully formula fed package and mom gets switched to the N package. Encourage mom to stay “partially breastfeeding” by breastfeeding more and using less formula. This will keep them “in range” and eligible for more food with breastfeeding food packages.
- Q:** Why is only powder formula offered the first month for partially breastfeeding infants?
- A:** We have been given federal guidance to only offer powder so that moms will only make the amount of formula (or bottles) they need to help them establish breastfeeding and return to exclusively breastfeeding. Powder allows more control in making bottles and without spoilage.
- Q:** What happens if the infant gets one can the first month and then does not need formula after that. What category does mom become and what packages do I issue?
- A:** As long as mom and baby are breastfeeding, mom is still a “B” or breastfeeding category but she will change to a “Fully Breastfeeding” food package VII and baby to “Fully breastfeeding” infant package “L” series. Both mom and infant should be re-vouchered.



**Frequently Asked Questions
Breastfeeding Promotion & Support
The New Food Packages, Vol 2: “Breastfeeding vs. Formula”**

- Q:** How do I handle a situation where a mom thinks she needs more formula?
- A:** Affirm her feelings. Tell her “most moms feel that way, and you are not alone.” Assessing her individually will tell you objectively if she is successfully breastfeeding her baby. Explain how to recognize if her baby is getting enough milk and possibly give her a handout. Build her confidence that she is doing well. Explain that formula-fed babies are at greater risk for infection and other problems and that formula will compromise her milk supply. Offer the new food package for fully breastfeeding moms that have greater food benefits.
- Q:** What do I do when a mom wants more formula because she may not understand it is not equal to breastmilk? I know breastfeeding is best, but I feel badly saying “no” and that I am holding back a benefit.
- A:** We have to look at giving formula as compromising her breastfeeding. Mom has the right to make an informed decision, understanding that it increases risk of her baby getting sick, etc. She has the right to learn and WIC is a great teacher. Share a breastfeeding affirmation statement and counsel her appropriately (or refer her to the WIC breastfeeding educator and Peer Counselor). You will serve her much better that way!
- Q:** If a mom is really trying to breastfeed, but is having some problems, how much formula do I give her? How do I help her?
- A:** A lactation educator needs to assess her situation and work together with her. Giving her the least amount needed to help her successfully breastfeed is the best decision for her and her baby. A Peer Counselor should follow up with her a couple of times within that week to support breastfeeding.
- Q:** What are the main food benefits of the new breastfeeding food packages?
- A:** It provides incentives for initiation and continuation of breastfeeding, especially exclusive breastfeeding, by encouraging no formula use the first month. It also provides more variety and larger quantities of foods for fully breastfeeding mothers (\$10 Cash Value Voucher, cheese, canned fish, beans *and* peanut butter). It supports breastmilk as the best food benefit for infants and offers more baby foods (fruits, vegetables and meats) for over six months of age.
- Q:** How can I help promote the benefits of the new Breastfeeding Food Package?
- A:** The new women’s Breastfeeding Food Packages are ultimately linked to the baby’s food packages; mom’s food package is based on how much they are breastfeeding, and thus, how much formula the baby receives. Staff is needed to encourage moms to breastfeed and further protect breastfeeding by only providing the minimum amount of formula required.



**Frequently Asked Questions
Breastfeeding Promotion & Support
The New Food Packages, Vol 3: “Formula Allocation”**

Q: I see that the chart shows I can give a partially breastfeeding infant up to four cans of formula for a six month old. Should I issue all partially breastfeeding infants the amount listed on the chart?

A: No, formula must be offered based on how breastfeeding is going. Do not routinely issue maximum amounts- only offer what is needed to **support** breastfeeding.

Q: How much formula do I issue a mom for the next three months? What happens if she requests more since she plans to go back to work or school?

A: Never issue more formula than her baby’s using in the current month based on a projection or guess; only offer her what she currently needs. For example, if she says she is returning to work next month, but we really don’t know if she will get a job. If we issued formula early it could impact her breastfeeding. Remember, she is getting more food benefits as a fully or partially breastfeeding woman; she always has the option to purchase formula on her own or she can return to the WIC clinic as well.

Q: How do I know what food package to give for fully breastfeeding dyads?

A: Fully breastfeeding infants get the “L1000 series (L for lactation). Fully breastfeeding women get the B0790 series. Tell moms that breastmilk is all her baby needs for about the first six months and that if she doesn’t use any formula, she will get more food for her baby. Tell her how great she is doing and that she must know that her breastmilk production is established the first month and formula will interfere with that!

Q: How do I know what food package to give an infant that is partially breastfeeding?

A: For “partially breastfeeding” infants, there are two groups: 1) the “in range” infants that receive **less** than the maximum amount of formula for their age or 2) the “out of range” infants that receive **more** than the maximum amount of formula for their age. (Refer to the Staff CPA Formula Chart for those amounts.)

- If a partially breastfeeding infant is “in range” provide from the L0000s packages (“L” for lactation). Partially breastfeeding moms would also be “in range” provide from the P0706 series packages.
- If a partially breastfeeding infant is “out of range” provide from the I0000s fully formula packages. Partially breastfeeding moms would also be “out of range” provide from the N0000 series packages. If this dyad is over six months, mom stays on the program as a breastfeeding woman but does not receive food benefits, voucher her with P0000.

Q: Why are there only maximum amounts of formula under the I0000 fully formula packages? The infant is partially breastfeeding but out of range?

A: The intent is to encourage women to not use more formula. If we can encourage women to stay in range as a partially breastfeeding dyad, and hold her at that threshold, maybe she won’t wean to formula so quickly. Use the new food packages as an incentive, and inform her that she gets more food dollars. If a mom wants just one or two more cans, suggest for her to breastfeed more and refer her to a lactation educator and Peer Counselor. She always has the



option to purchase formula on her own. We know the more the formula is used, the less breastmilk is taken and weaning also occurs sooner. WIC supports breastfeeding!

Q: If a mother needs the maximum amount of formula for her infant, which food package will she receive?

A: If the mother is breastfeeding, and less than six months postpartum, she will receive the “N” food package (also used for postpartum women). If she is more than six months postpartum, she will not receive food benefits but provide her with “P0000” Breastfeeding is best; you’re an awesome mom!” voucher. This will continue to count her in your clinic caseload as a breastfeeding mom. She will remain on the program and will continue to receive benefits of pump use, Peer Counseling and nutrition support.

Q: Why is there a maximum amount of formula allowed for the partially breastfed infant and mom?

A: The new food rules indicate that the maximum amount of formula that a partially breastfeeding mom/baby may receive after the first month postpartum is about *half of the fully formula fed amount*. This is to place emphasis on limiting the amount of formula a breastfeeding mom is offered; this could be viewed as a new “maximum” amount of formula a “partially breastfeeding” mom can get. We don’t want her to jump to the “out of range” packages; we instead want to support breastfeeding and give her the most food benefits. The more formula a mom gets from WIC, the more she will feed it to her baby and the less breastmilk that baby will receive. Weaning will occur sooner too. Staff should evaluate mom’s breastfeeding plan, challenges, and provide only the amount of formula that is needed.

Q: Are we to use the breastfeeding food packages as incentives?

A: Yes. The intent is to encourage women to not give their baby more formula. The greater food benefits for both mom and baby can be used as incentives. As staff, this also helps us feel better about giving her something in place of the formula. We really aren’t saying “no” but offering more dollars in her package!

Q: If a partially breastfeeding mom and infant over six months of age are “out of range” status, why do I still keep the mom on the program? Wouldn’t she be considered postpartum since she does not receive food benefits?

A: Category and food packages are separate issues. If the mom is doing any breastfeeding she remains a category “B” but if she elects to get more formula, she will not get food benefits. Voucher mom with “P0000” so she can be counted in your clinic as breastfeeding. She can also still receive other benefits such as nutrition and breastfeeding counseling, Peer Counseling support, breast pumps, and education.

Q: Why do some formula packages give four cans and some that are the approximate same size (weight) allow five cans?

A: Maximum ranges for age is based on reconstituted amounts of that individual product and not on weight of the product as the past regulation specified.



**Frequently Asked Questions
Breastfeeding Promotion & Support
The New Food Packages, Vol 4: “Food Packages”**

Q: Why are baby meats offered at six months of age, and only to exclusively breastfed infants?

A: All infants need a source of iron and zinc around six months of age; baby food meats are an excellent source of these nutrients. These foods are provided to exclusively breastfed infants as an incentive to encourage moms to continue exclusively breastfeeding.

Q: WIC is offering jarred baby foods. How do I encourage moms to make their own baby foods from the table?

A: WIC is not providing all the baby food an infant needs. Encourage participants to prepare baby foods from their table by focusing on the benefits of home-prepared baby food: fresher, less expensive, easier to control texture, easier transitioning to “table foods”, etc.

Q: How do we offer 1.5 times the maximum allowance of authorized foods for women in Food Package VII who are fully breastfeeding multiple infants from the same pregnancy?

A: Look for the food package fully breastfeeding multiple infants under the breastfeeding food package VII. This package **MUST** be issued by **ALTERNATING** with the Fully Breastfeeding package For example:

- First vouchering period: 1st month = fully bf multiples, 2nd month = fully breastfeeding, 3rd month = fully bf multiples
- Next vouchering period: 4th month = fully breastfeeding, 5th month = fully bf multiples, etc.

This is because the fully breastfeeding multiples offers double the amount of most foods so it must alternate months with the regular fully breastfeeding package = averages out to 1.5 times. (Cash value vouchers and milk are the only items already averaged out on all vouchers at 1.5 times.) Staffs need to make sure there is no over-issuance with three month vouchering cycles. When mom returns for her second visit, month four must not start with this package if she received it last month.

Q: Why don't infants get juice anymore?

A: Drinking too much juice can lead to overweight or obesity. Infants who drink too much fruit juice, may not get enough nutrition, may have diarrhea, and may get cavities. Fruit juice gives no benefit to younger infants. Other forms of fruit are better than juice for older infants. WIC provides baby food fruits, starting at six months of age.

Q: Why don't we give cereal until the infant is six months old?

A: Breastfeeding all the nutrients a young baby needs and should be their only source of food. No other foods should be added for about the first six months of life. Between four-six months of age an infant is ready to accept solid foods. WIC provides infant cereal starting at six months because most infants are ready for solids by this age. Rice infant cereal is an ideal first food as it is easy to digest and rich in iron.