



September 29, 2009

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in West Virginia will begin offering new, healthy food choices on October 1, 2009. In addition, West Virginia WIC will use a health messaging strategy that will be coordinated across the state. With your support, WIC participants statewide will be hearing the same clear messages about healthy new foods.

The West Virginia WIC Program expects to raise local awareness when the new WIC food packages are implemented. WIC has the potential to reach the caregivers of one-half of all infants and one quarter of all preschoolers in West Virginia, as well as one third of all expectant mothers, and support them in maintaining healthy lifestyles. The reach and focus of the WIC program offers a unique opportunity to reduce and prevent childhood obesity in the mountain state.

In addition:

- There are approximately 52,000 women, infants and children in West Virginia who are benefiting from our multiple services such as nutrition education, health care referrals and food to those who qualify.
- October is Child Nutrition Month and Campaign for Healthier Babies Month. The increased exposure of proper childhood nutrition would directly relate to these national movements.
- Proper nutrition during a child's first 5 years reduces the long-term health care costs for our community.

Finally, I'd like to thank you for the support you have given WIC through the years. We appreciate the coverage you have given our program, and we hope to be able to continue the relationship our local agencies have built with you. Your coverage on WIC helps area families.

If you have further questions, please contact me at 304-558-0030.

Sincerely,

Denise V. Ferris

Denise V. Ferris RD, LD, DrPH
WV WIC State Director



WIC offers families personalized nutrition consultations, vouchers for free, healthy food, tips for eating well to improve health, as well as referrals for medical and dental care, health insurance, child care and other services that can benefit the whole family.

WIC helps you save on groceries, so you have more to spend on other things your family needs.

WIC is for all kinds of families – married and single parents, working or not working, receiving other types of aid or not participating in any other programs. If you are a father, mother, grandparent, foster parent or other legal guardian of a child, you can apply for WIC for a child up until their fifth birthday.



**Food package for
children ages 2 through 5.**



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PRESS RELEASE

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IMMEDIATE RELEASE

West Virginia WIC Program to Offer Healthier Food Choices

CHARLESTON, Oct. 1 – Director of the Office of Nutrition Services Denise Ferris announced statewide implementation of revised food packages provided by the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC). The West Virginia WIC Program will begin offering new, healthy food choices on October 1, 2009. Women, infants and young children participating in the program will receive a variety of healthier foods, including fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain products such as bread and cereal, jarred baby foods, and soy beverages.

Since 1974, WIC has combated childhood hunger, low birth weight, under-nutrition, and iron deficiency anemia so that WIC participants have better health outcomes. However, new dietary recommendations to eat less fat, more fiber, fewer overall calories, fewer sweetened beverages and more vegetables and fruits as well as changes in the factors affecting the health of women, infants and children prompted a review of the foods provided by WIC.

The new foods provided by the West Virginia WIC Program follow changes issued by the USDA's Food and Nutrition Service. It largely reflects recommendations made by the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academies in the final report of its analysis of the WIC food packages, *WIC Food Packages: Time for a Change*, as well as the latest nutrition science and the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans. The new choices also encourage breastfeeding and support infant feeding practices recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

"We are pleased to announce that the new food packages will include fruits, vegetables and whole grains, which are essential to a healthier diet," said WIC Director Denise Ferris. "The addition of these foods better reflect the needs of mothers and children in the WIC program. The new food choices are designed to improve the health of our state's pregnant women, new mothers, infants and young children with nutrition education to support healthy eating habits," added Ferris.

MORE

As a way to introduce friendly and engaging healthy messages into West Virginia's new food package rollout, Sesame Street's Healthy Habits for Life multimedia outreach kits will be distributed to WIC families. The kit consists of an original DVD and storybook starring the Sesame Street Muppets, featuring "The Get Healthy Now Show" that encourages children with the help of their friends, Elmo, Telly, and Rosita, to explore ways to eat and drink so they can play, learn, and grow up healthy. It also includes a guide for parents and caregivers that contains strategies and hands-on activities for everyday and on the go.

WIC provides pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up until their fifth birthday with nutritious supplemental foods. The program also provides nutrition education and referrals to health and social services. More than 52,000 West Virginia participants receive WIC benefits each month, with a federal investment of over \$48 million in FY 2008. WIC food packages were first designed in 1974 to supplement participants' diets with foods rich in five nutrients-vitamins A and C, calcium, iron, and protein-because those nutrients were lacking in the diets of the WIC target population. The WIC program has long been considered one of the most successful federal health programs.

A copy of the federal interim final rule, can be found at www.fns.usda.gov/wic/ For more information or for the WIC clinic nearest you, call 2-1-1 or 304-558-0030. You may also apply for WIC on the internet at <http://ons.wvdhhr.org/>.

XXX



The graphic features a light blue background with a red and blue curved border. On the left, under the heading "WIC Benefits Include:", a list of services is provided. In the center is the West Virginia WIC logo, which includes the text "WEST VIRGINIA WIC" and a circular emblem with a baby and a woman. On the right, a red-bordered box titled "Income Guidelines" contains a table with two columns: "Number of people in household" and "Monthly income before taxes". Below the table, a question asks if the reader knows someone who is pregnant, breastfeeding, or has a child under 5 years old, followed by a call to action to call today to see if they or someone they know qualifies.

WIC Benefits Include:

- Breastfeeding Support
- Referrals to Health Care Providers
- Assistance Making Healthy Choices
- Nutrition Education & Counseling
- Help with Immunizations
- Health Screening
- Nutritious Food

WEST VIRGINIA WIC

Income Guidelines

Number of people in household	Monthly income before taxes
1	\$1,670
2	\$2,247
3	\$2,823
4	\$3,400
5	\$3,976

Do you know someone who is pregnant, breastfeeding, had a baby in the last six months or has a child less than 5 years old?

Call today to see if you or someone you know qualifies.

WIC Food Packages....Time for a Change

Fact Sheet

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.

Major Changes to the West Virginia WIC Food Packages

New foods

- Fresh Fruits and vegetables
- Whole grain cereals and breads
- Baby foods – fruits and vegetables for all infants and meat for fully breastfed infants

New alternatives

- Soy beverage for milk
- Canned beans for dried beans
- Canned salmon for canned tuna

New quantities

- Quantities of milk, eggs, juice and cheese are reduced for women and children to provide less saturated fat, sugar and cholesterol as well as to be more consistent with recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and WIC's role as a supplemental nutrition program.
- Juice is eliminated for infant packages in favor of baby food fruits. In addition, quantities are reduced for all participants to reflect a recommended daily juice intake of approximately four ounces per day. Excessive juice intake has been strongly associated with overweight children and obesity as well as tooth decay in the preschool child population.
- Quantities of infant formula are reduced for breastfed infants to help mothers build and maintain their milk supply, and older infants to support introduction of complementary foods and promote healthy dietary patterns.

How do the new WIC food packages reflect the recommendations of the Institute of Medicine (IOM)?

The new WIC food packages largely reflect the recommendations of the IOM, with certain cost adjustments determined necessary by the United States Department of Agriculture to maintain cost neutrality. WIC State agencies receive an annual grant that they must operate within while complying with program requirements.

How do the new food packages provide greater consistency with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans?

The new WIC food packages include fruits and vegetables, and whole grains for the first time. Reductions are made to the amounts of certain foods (milk, juice, eggs) to be more

consistent with recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and WIC's role as a supplemental nutrition program.

How do the new food packages provide greater consistency with American Academy of Pediatrics infant feeding practice guidelines?

Under the new food packages, the introduction of complementary foods is delayed from four to six months of age and modifies infant formula amounts. Infant foods are added and juice eliminated in the packages for older infants in order to promote healthy dietary patterns.

How do the new food packages address public health nutrition-related issues?

The revised food packages for women and children provide less saturated fat and cholesterol, more fiber, and fruits and vegetables. The food packages for breastfeeding infant-mother pairs provide stronger incentives for continued breastfeeding, including providing less formula to partially breastfed infants and additional quantities and types of food for breastfeeding mothers.

How do the new food packages reinforce the nutrition education messages provided to WIC participants?

The new food packages are more consistent with the nutrition education messages provided to participants, i.e., "eat more fruits and vegetables"; "lower saturated fat"; "increase whole grains and fiber"; "drink less sweetened beverages and juice"; "babies are meant to be breastfed."

How do the new food packages appeal to WIC's culturally diverse populations?

The new food packages provide more participant choice and a wider variety of foods than the previous food packages. Foods such as soy-based beverage, canned beans, canned salmon, and a wide choice of fresh fruits and vegetables will provide WIC nutritionists increased flexibility in prescribing culturally appropriate food packages.

How do the new food packages support breastfeeding?

The new food packages for breastfeeding infant-mother pairs are revised to provide stronger incentives for continued breastfeeding. For example, the new food package for fully breastfeeding women provides greater amounts of foods, including a higher dollar value for fresh fruits and vegetables. Fully breastfeeding infants receive baby food meats in addition to greater amounts of baby food fruits and vegetables. Less infant formula is provided to partially breastfeeding infants so that they may receive the benefits of breastmilk. A minimal amount of infant formula is provided to partially breastfeeding infants in the first month after birth in order to help mothers build and maintain their milk supply.

Why are some foods (dairy, juice, eggs) reduced in the new WIC food packages?

Reductions are made to the amounts of certain foods (milk, juice, eggs and cheese) to be more consistent with recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and WIC's role as a supplemental nutrition program as well as to develop new food packages that were relatively cost neutral. Juice was replaced with baby food fruits and fresh fruits.

Why are the amounts of infant formula reduced in some food packages?

Infant formula amounts are reduced to reflect the nutrition needs of infants at different ages and feeding methods (breastfed versus non-breastfeeding). Infant formula for infants 6-12 months of age is replaced by baby foods – fruits, vegetables, meats.

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.

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For logos or graphics, please contact us.