

## Helping WIC Participants Make the Switch to Low-Fat (1%) and Fat-Free Milk

The *2010 Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and the [MyPlate icon and website](#) encourage the consumption of low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk as part of an overall healthy diet. Consumption of low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk in place of whole and reduced-fat (2%) milk can help participants two years and older meet dietary recommendations for saturated fat intake and maintain a healthy body weight.



WIC provides low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk for women and children two through four years of age. FNS encourages State agencies to consider when to educate and assist WIC participants in switching from higher fat milks to low-fat (1%) and fat-free milks. Effective nutrition education uses a client-centered approach to address barriers to changing the type of milk consumed while promoting the contributions lower fat milks make to a healthy diet.

Nutrition education efforts should also consider the following:

- Some participants may be more receptive to gradually changing the type of milk consumed, in which they first attempt switching from whole milk to reduced-fat (2%) milk and then to low-fat (1%) or fat-free milk.
- FNS conducted focus groups with low-income moms across the nation and learned that many moms were unaware that low-fat (1%) and fat-free milks provide the “same nutrition but less fat” than whole and reduced-fat (2%) milk. This misperception may represent a significant barrier to behavior change and can serve as a starting point for nutrition education.
- Mothers may also need assistance in identifying different types of milk by reading the food label. Formative research has shown that many individuals are unable to correctly identify the difference between fat-free, low-fat (1%), reduced-fat (2%), and whole milks.
- FNS encourages State agencies to visit the [WIC Works Resource System’s Sharing Center](#) to find materials other State agencies have developed to facilitate the change to low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk.
- The [FNS Core Nutrition Messages website](#) contains several communication tools, including an informative milk video, rollover widget, FAQ’s and mom stories that can assist WIC staff in helping participants make the switch to low-fat (1%) and fat-free milk.