

The New WIC Food Package... What It Means for Breastfeeding



Time for a Change



Breastfeeding Promotion and Support is a Primary Goal of the WIC Program

WIC has a legislative mandate to unequivocally endorse breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding, unless medically contraindicated.

WIC follows the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) positions and guidelines (as well as those of all other major medical organizations) citing exclusive breastfeeding as the goal and gold standard for infant nutrition.

Core Breastfeeding Policies

The WIC Program recognizes that breastfeeding is the normal method for feeding infants and thus, breastfeeding must be considered the first and preferred method to feed infants, unless otherwise contraindicated for health reasons.

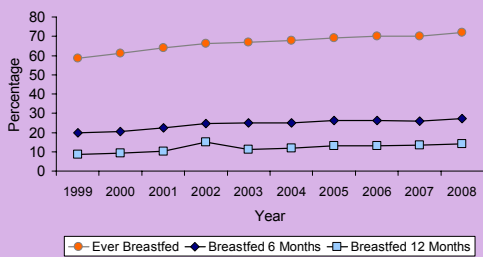
Staff must assume that fully breastfeeding is the normal method of infant feeding and encourage the selection of the fully breastfeeding package without formula.

Request for formula must be assessed by nutrition staff to determine the appropriateness of supplementation for the infant. Counseling must address the mother's interests, barriers and problems.

Breastfeeding Resources for WIC Families

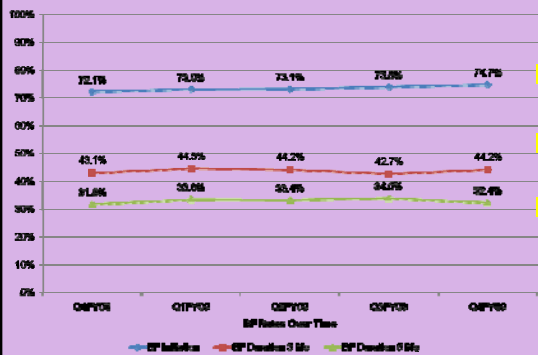
- Ongoing, Timely Breastfeeding Counseling and Education
- Local Program Breastfeeding Coordinators
- Peer Counselors
- Nutrition Staff and Other Trained Staff
- Other Experienced Mothers
- Breast Pump Programs
- Infant Feeding Groups/Breastfeeding Classes/Support Groups
- Print Materials
- Connections with Community Breastfeeding Resources (www.massbfc.org)

Trends in the percentage of Massachusetts WIC infants ever breastfed, and breastfed at least 6 and 12 months



2008 MA PedNSS

Breastfeeding Rates – Over Time in 2009



Source: WIC "Breastfeeding Initiated by WIC Mom Reports," run in Q4 SFY08 – Q4 SFY09 (not a part of PedNSS report).

History of WIC Foods

Since 1980, the only significant change made in the WIC food packages occurred in 1992, when the set of foods provided for breastfeeding women was expanded.



Why Revise the WIC Food Packages?

Changes have occurred in the major health and nutrition risks faced by WIC's target population, including:

- diets lacking in whole grains and fruit and vegetables
- short duration of breastfeeding
- overweight and obesity



Why Revise the WIC Food Packages?

A substantial shift in the ethnic composition of the WIC population.



- Hispanics made up 39 percent of the WIC caseload in 2004, up from 21 percent in 1988.
- Asians and Pacific Islanders have become a substantial part of the WIC population in several states over the same period.

Reinforce Nutrition Education Messages

- “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”



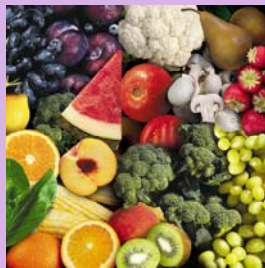
Add Foods to Appeal to Diverse Populations

- Tortillas
- Brown rice and other whole grains
- Soy beverage
- Tofu
- Wide choice of fruits and vegetables for ethnic variety
- Canned salmon, sardines, mackerel



Add Fruits and Vegetables

- Cash value-vouchers (\$6, \$8, or \$10) for fruits and vegetables for children and women
- Participants may choose from a wide variety of fruits and vegetables
- Fresh, frozen and canned allowed



Add Whole Grains

- Whole wheat or whole grain bread for children and women
- Whole grain options
 - Brown Rice
 - Soft Corn and Whole Grain Tortillas



Require Whole Grain Cereals

At least half of the cereals on a State agency's food list must be whole grain.



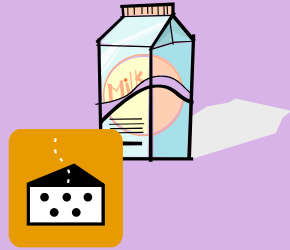
Reduce Juice Allowance for Children and Women

- Reduces quantities of juice for children and women
- Amounts align with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and recommendations of the American Academy of Pediatrics



Reduce Milk and Dairy Allowances

Reduces quantities of milk and cheese for children and women to align with 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.



Only Skim or Low-Fat Milk



Only skim or low-fat milk is authorized for women and children > 2 years of age.

Add New Milk and Dairy Alternatives

- Soy-based beverage*
- Tofu



*Medical documentation required for women and children to receive soy-based beverage and for children to receive tofu as alternatives to milk.

Reduce Quantities of Eggs

Reduces quantity of eggs to align with 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans.



Add New Canned Fish for Fully Breastfeeding Women

- Continues to allow canned **light tuna** (no albacore)
- Allows other canned fish identified as lower in mercury
 - **Salmon**
 - **Sardines**



Other Changes...Legumes

- Adds legumes (beans or peanut butter) to food package for postpartum women to improve the intake of iron, folate, Vitamin E, and fiber.



- Allows canned beans to be substituted for dried beans for all children and women.

Continue to Serve Medically Fragile Participants

- Continues to provide exempt infant formula and medical foods
- Now authorizes medically fragile participants to receive other WIC supplemental foods



Revise Food Packages for Infants

- Formula amounts tied to feeding practice and age of infant
- Complementary foods delayed to 6 months
- Juice eliminated
- Baby food fruits and vegetables for infants
- Baby food meat for fully breastfed babies



Provide Breastfeeding Incentives and Support

New changes in the WIC food packages help WIC more actively promote and support breastfeeding through the food packages provided to participants.



Provide Breastfeeding Incentives and Support

- Fully breastfeeding mothers receive most variety and largest quantity of food, including \$10 cash-value voucher for fruits and vegetables.
- Fully breastfeeding infants > 6 months receive larger quantities of baby food fruits and vegetables; also baby food meat.



New Food Packages for Partially Breastfeeding Infants

- Compared to previous food packages, partially breastfed infants receive less infant formula to allow mothers to feed more breast milk to their infants.
- No routine issuance of formula to breastfed babies in first month of life to help mother maintain milk supply.

The changes to the WIC food packages hold potential for improving the nutrition and health of the nation's low-income pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and young children.

Institute of Medicine, 2005

Moving Forward

- Monitoring of Food Package Implementation and Breastfeeding Rates
- Continuation of Breastfeeding Performance Improvement Project
- Expansion of Peer Counselor Program
- Implementation of Breastfeeding Competency Training for All WIC Staff
- Strengthening of Pump Loan Program
- Ongoing Training Opportunities for Staff



For More Information...

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