



Healthlink

A publication by the Women, Infants & Children (WIC) Program
Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Commissioners: Carol Aichele, Terence Farrell, Kathi Cozzone

"Good Nutrition Today For A Healthier Tomorrow"

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New Food Packages Coming to WIC –

First major changes in 30 years!

The United States Department of Agriculture has announced that proposed food changes to the vouchers received by the women, infants, and children on the WIC program have been approved by Congress. The changes will reflect the need in American diets for less fat and sugar, more vitamins and minerals, and healthier choices in carbohydrates. The Pennsylvania Department of Health has eighteen months to initiate the changes for WIC participants in our state.

The new vouchers will provide:

- Monthly amounts of approximately \$6 to \$8 for the purchase of fresh fruits and vegetables for women and children. A welcome addition to the program, these dollars will help low-income homes afford more of these expensive foods.
- Whole wheat bread will be added for all women and children. Allowable replacements for bread that might be more culturally correct for some families include brown rice, soft corn or whole wheat tortillas, or bulgur.
- Milk and cheese will continue to be provided but in lesser quantities with less fat. Participants who are allergic to milk or prefer the taste of soy products will now be allowed to use soy-beverages or tofu.
- Infants will be provided with some baby food fruits and vegetables while infant juice will no longer be given.



- Breastfed infants and their nursing mothers will be given enhanced food packages to encourage more women to nurse their babies.



The WIC food packages must meet rigorous standards for nutritional content but remain within reasonable cost guidelines. The new allowable foods should provide healthier outcomes, increase options, and aid in the fight against obesity among American children.

According to Dave Thomason, President of the National WIC Association and the Director of the Kansas WIC Program, "WIC will now have real tools ---the new and improved food packages-- to support the quality nutrition education efforts that WIC clinics promote to WIC mothers and children." For more information, go to the National WIC Association webpage at www.nica.org or to the USDA website, www.nal.usda.gov.

***Be on the look-out for newspaper
and journal articles on the new and
improved WIC Food Packages!***

The Latest News on Nursing

Breastfeeding education and support for our pregnant and nursing moms is an important part of WIC. Our nutritionists/dietitians are required to make sure each expectant mother knows the benefits of nursing for both herself and her infant. If the woman does not choose to breastfeed, her infant will be provided with formula, but we work very hard to encourage our mothers to nurse their babies.

The Chester County WIC Program currently leads all WIC agencies across the state of Pennsylvania with the incidence of breastfeeding among our participants. From July 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007, our county had 68.85% of our pregnant women enrolled in WIC begin to nurse their babies at birth. Across the State, the WIC incidence rate for breastfeeding is 44.14%.

While the Healthy People 2010 objectives for breastfeeding in the United States suggest that 75% of all women should be nursing their infants at time of hospital release, we are delighted that so many of our at-risk, lower-income mothers are making the right decision to breastfeed their infants.

Our Chester County WIC Program has also experienced an increase in the duration of breastfeeding for the last six months. Our mean duration increased from 13 weeks to almost 20 weeks of nursing.

Our WIC staff at present includes two Certified Lactation Counselors, Paula Taylor and Kathleen McCarthy. All 4 dietitians, 5 nutritionists, and 6 clerical assistants receive on-going breastfeeding education during our staff meetings. Some of us were also able to attend the National WIC Conference last spring in Pittsburgh, and the American Dietetic Association meeting last fall in Philadelphia to increase our breastfeeding knowledge.

At WIC, we know that it takes all health professionals working together to obtain desired behaviors, so we wish to thank all of you who also encourage breastfeeding among your patients. The Nurse Family Partnership nurses, Title V nurses, ob-gyn clinics and doctors, and maternity nurses in this county must be helping our WIC clients to nurse successfully in order for our county to be leading in the state WIC statistics.

We are very proud of our WIC nursing mothers and plan to continue to help them as they offer the most natural, most beneficial, chock-full of great ingredients food for their babies' first year of life!



Some Benefits of Breastmilk

For Babies:

- ♥ Complete nutrition for baby
- ♥ Boosts baby's immune system
- ♥ Protects against illness/infections
- ♥ Easy to digest
- ♥ Prevents tooth decay
- ♥ Promotes optimal brain development
- ♥ Protects against allergies
- ♥ Reduces incidence of obesity
- ♥ Helps develop sense of taste

For Moms:

- ♥ Helps mom form close bond with baby
- ♥ Reduces risk of breast cancer
- ♥ Speeds post-partum weight loss
- ♥ Provides portable, convenient, economical nutrition for her baby

WIC is an equal opportunity employer and provider.