



# WIC NEWS

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Special Supplemental Nutrition Program  
for Women, Infants, and Children

December 2022

### Note from the Director

As valued members of the WIC Team, I would like to take the opportunity to thank you all for your hard work and dedication. Throughout this year of great change and in many cases of uncertainty, you have stood out as employees who have never wavered in your commitment to excellence! You truly are WIC STARS!

I would also like to thank the WIC Division staff who have gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that each of our clients receives the best customer care and service. Your dedication and commitment have not wavered, and you have weathered many storms and continue to adapt to changes daily. I couldn't be prouder of the work that each of you has accomplished this year!

Special shout out to Gloria Zunker, Heather Sanders and the planning committee on another successful WIC Coordinator Summit. What an outstanding two days of great information, speakers, fun activities and more! Your hard work and attention to detail to create a great learning experience for everyone have not gone unnoticed. Hats off to each of you!

I wish you and your families the happiest of holiday seasons.

Christina Herring-Johnson  
Michigan WIC Director



# Double Up Food Bucks: Michigan families get more healthy food

Andi Nank, Fair Food Network

Since 2009, Double Up Food Bucks has helped Michigan families who use SNAP/EBT bring home more healthy food. How does it work? Double Up matches SNAP/EBT/Michigan Bridge Card dollars spent on fruits and vegetables, up to \$10 per day. That means families can get twice the fresh fruits and veggies when using their Bridge Card and Double Up at participating locations.



Double Up is available at more than 260 grocery stores, farmers markets and farm stands across Michigan. Anyone receiving SNAP benefits is automatically eligible to use Double Up. Learn more and find participating locations at [DoubleUpFoodBucks.org](http://DoubleUpFoodBucks.org).

## Healthy communities, healthy babies

Courtney Miller, MDHHS Division of Lifecourse Epidemiology and Genomics

The CDC recognizes January as National Birth Defects Awareness Month. This is a time to raise awareness about birth defects and highlight efforts to improve the health of people living with these conditions across their lifespans. Not all birth defects can be prevented. However, MDHHS encourage all pregnant people and prospective parents to make healthy choices and adopt healthier habits to help lower their risk of having a baby born with a birth defect.

Further, there are persistent racial/ethnic disparities when considering healthy communities and healthy babies. We continue to see racial disparities both in the occurrence of birth defects as well as in the survival of children born with birth defects. It is essential that we work together to better understand the causes of these racial disparities so they can be addressed.

There is hope for a healthier future. Join the National Birth Defects Prevention Network (NBDPN) and our partners in improving health in your community. Consider adding provider and parent resources to this [interactive map](#) so that together we can work towards a day when all babies are born with the best health possible.

Thank you in advance for promoting these tips for healthy communities and healthy babies for National Birth Defects Awareness Month!

## 5 tips for preventing birth defects

- 1: Take 400 micrograms (mcg) of folic acid every day.
- 2: Book a visit with your healthcare provider.
- 3: Become up-to-date with vaccines.
- 4: Care for your body and mind before and during pregnancy to set you and your baby up for success.
- 5: Boost your health by avoiding harmful substances during pregnancy, such as alcohol, tobacco and other drugs.



# Breastfeeding Update

## Get pumped for milk expression!

Breast massage, milk storage and pumps, oh my! There's so much to know and learn about when it comes to milk expression. Luckily, the MDHHS WIC website has you covered! Check out the [Milk Expression](#) section where you can find all the educational resources you need to be an effective educator for your breastfeeding families!

- Breast pump descriptions.
- Guidance on specialty feeding equipment.
- Breast pump compliance documents.
- Information on the Haakaa milk collection device.
- Pump troubleshooting.
- Flange sizing.
- Milk storage.
- Hand expression.
- Milk sharing.
- Donor milk for mothers living with HIV.

We'd love to hear from you! If you have any suggestions on how to improve the Milk Expression section of the website, please email Marji Cyrul at [cyrulm@michigan.gov](mailto:cyrulm@michigan.gov) or Dionne Moore-Smith at [mooresmithd@michigan.gov](mailto:mooresmithd@michigan.gov).

## Local Agency Highlights

### Washtenaw County Health Department

The Washtenaw County WIC Program routinely sends wishes for happy holidays and lots of WIC updates to their community maternal child health partners. Included in the email newsletters are thanks for their continued support of our program, a program overview, a simple breakdown of the methods of referring to WIC and a reminder of shared goals. This is a great way to ensure partner buy-in and keep in regular touch with other programs and organizations serving WIC-eligible families!



### Kent County

The Kent County Health Department WIC Program partnered with its local Great Start Collaborative to host their first-ever Diaper Drive. The Diaper Drive was a month long and more than 2,000 diapers were collected to be donated to local community organizations for distribution to Kent County families in need.

# Nutrition 101

## Holiday foods from around the world

Liz Weiss, MS, RDN

*Encourage clients to travel the globe in their kitchens during this festive season.*

What do the holidays mean to you? For many people in the United States, the holiday season starts in November with Thanksgiving; sweeps through Hanukkah, Kwanzaa and Christmas, and doesn't really let up until New Year's. It's an exhilarating and sometimes exhausting time.

The holidays bring people together to share all kinds of traditions, songs, ceremonies and decorations, but at the heart of every holiday is food. Families celebrate with a bounty of traditional dishes and desserts that nourish the soul and, in some cases, the body as well. They share roasted turkey and honey-glazed ham, cornbread dressing and green bean casserole, latkes and collard greens, cranberry sauce and creamed spinach and desserts such as pecan and pumpkin pie.

People ritualize food to create some ceremonial significance as years pass. Holiday dishes become so habitual that it can feel a bit sacrilegious to even consider changing up the menu. But take a step outside your own family or culture and you'll find a whole world of holidays, with all kinds of rituals and celebrations and the many flavors that come with them. What if you could travel to India for Diwali, China for Chinese New Year or Syria for Easter?

What would your senses experience if you celebrated other people's holidays with their dishes? The scent of cardamom in garbanzo fudge ladoos? The burst of lime and citrus and spice in roasted pork? The sizzle of buñuelos frying?

### Global Traditions

Holiday celebrations are a unique and rich window into other cultures. To broaden our understanding of how people from around the world celebrate—and what they eat—*Today's Dietitian* speaks with seven Registered Dietitians (RDs) with roots in a myriad of places on the planet to create a primer on favorite holidays, discuss the foods that traditionally accompany those celebrations and provide recipes that sample delicious special-occasion foods from around the world.

Mbali Mapholi, RD, a private practice dietitian from the Zulu tribe in South Africa, says, "The most celebrated holiday from my culture is the Royal Reed Dance ceremony, an annual event that aims to celebrate and unify the Zulu nation. This weekend sees thousands of maidens across the country come out to the Zulu King Royal house in my home village for the whole weekend." Traditional Zulu foods take center stage during this holiday: "Isigwaqane (maizemeal with beans), isijingi (maize-meal and pumpkin), amasi (maize-meal and maas, fermented milk), imifino (wild leafy vegetable drink) and umqombothi (fermented traditional sorghum beer)."

Vandana Sheth, RDN, CDCES, FAND, author of *My Indian Table: Quick & Tasty Vegetarian Recipes* and 2021 recipient of the Outstanding Dietitian of the Year award from Nutrition Entrepreneurs Dietetic Practice Group, who was born and raised in Madras (now Chennai), India, and lives in Los Angeles, describes how even within one country, the details can differ regionally. "Sweets are a big part of festivals, holidays and celebrations," but specifics matter when it comes to food traditions, Sheth says. "In the North [of India], you are often welcomed as a guest with something sweet or you begin the meal with a sweet treat. In the South, usually the sweet is served at the end of a meal. This dichotomy was fascinating to me when we would visit family in the North or have guests visit our home in the South. Indian desserts are usually prepared on the stove top and not baked in the oven."



## Symbolism

Celebratory food often is loaded with symbolism. Korean American Maggie Moon, MS, RD, associate vice president of nutrition communications for The Wonderful Company in Los Angeles, describes the Korean food served in the winter: “P’atjuk is a red bean porridge that’s customary to enjoy throughout the 12th month, but especially on the shortest day of the year, the Winter Solstice (Dongji). The red bean is symbolic as a color of strength, positivity, and the sun. The red bean porridge is meant to chase away evil spirits, and long ago was also sprinkled around the main gates to the home. It was a way to celebrate the day the sun comes to life again.”

The symbolism of Chinese New Year foods is rich, too, says Mary Lee Chin, MS, RDN, a Denver-based food and nutrition communications consultant with Nutrition Edge Communications, who was born in Massachusetts to Chinese immigrant parents. “Trays of tangerines would be set out, as the Chinese words for tangerine and for gold are similar and it foretells good fortune,” she says. “Candied or dried lychee nuts (strong family relationships), coconut (togetherness) and melons (good health and growth) are among the selections in the Box of Harmony, a round or octagonal tray of candies, to begin the New Year sweetly.”

Learning about customs, symbols and food traditions in other cultures enables RDs to see (and taste) from their clients’ perspectives, with a deeper understanding of the rich variety of traditional foods. While a tweak here and there nutritionally is appropriate and it’s always great to add things such as fruits, veggies and whole grains to a meal, it’s more important that clients learn how celebration foods can fit into an overall healthful diet and lifestyle than it is for every single food to have a perfect nutritional profile. Holidays should nourish the body and soul.

[Click here for recipes and to read more about holiday celebrations from other cultures!](#)

*Holiday Foods From Around the World - Today’s Dietitian Magazine.* (n.d.). [Www.todaysdietitian.com](http://www.todaysdietitian.com). Retrieved November 9, 2022, from <https://www.todaysdietitian.com/newarchives/ND21p22.shtml>

## WIC Staff Celebrations

Please help us congratulate Suzette Daly who retired from WIC in September! We will miss her greatly and congratulate her on her retirement.

Suzette has worked as a contractor for the State of Michigan for seven years conducting management evaluations of local WIC agencies and serving as an occasional trainer. She made sure Local WIC Agencies were meeting federal guidelines but even better, she was able to talk to WIC Coordinators and work out solutions. Suzette observed tremendous amounts of positive strengths that WIC staff used to help clients and brought this information to the attention of the local WIC agency administrations and the WIC State staff.

During the COVID pandemic, it was apparent that WIC clients greatly appreciated WIC staff checking in on them. Suzette reported that some clients stated they were so isolated at home and the only people who called them and cared about them were WIC Staff. Suzette said she has never been prouder of WIC staff and is proud to be a part of this program than when clients were telling her this.

Prior to her time with the State, Suzette worked as a Public Health Nurse for 35 years at the Health Department of Northwest Michigan where she coordinated the following programs: WIC, Immunizations, Communicable Diseases, CLIA, Hearing and Vision, Fluoride and helped in the Administration of the Emergency Preparedness Program. She was a Supervisor of Registered Nurses in Antrim and Charlevoix Counties.

Please join us in congratulating Suzette on her retirement from WIC.

Thank you, Suzette, for your service to the WIC Program!

# Outreach

## Michigan WIC Client Advisory Council launch

Whitney Jackson, WIC Strategist

After months of hard work and planning, we will officially launch the Michigan WIC Client Advisory Council (CAC) in January 2023!

We thank you so much for your assistance with the promotion of this opportunity. More than 20,000 current and former WIC clients and caregivers applied to serve on our council. Seeing that level of interest in the opportunity to share ongoing feedback was incredibly encouraging. We have taken such joy in conducting interviews and are confident that we have selected a wonderfully engaged and invested group.

We will convene virtual monthly meetings to discuss all aspects of the WIC Program. Council members have been asked to commit to serving for a full term of one year and will be compensated for their time.

If you have questions about the CAC, please email co-lead Whitney Jackson at [JacksonW6@Michigan.gov](mailto:JacksonW6@Michigan.gov). We will continue to share updates and we thank you again for your partnership.

## MOTHER INFANT HEALTH & EQUITY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

### Year Three Highlights – 2022



Disparities between Black and white infant deaths in Michigan have decreased from a ratio of 3.4 in 2018, to 2.6 in 2020.

By 2023, Michigan's goal is to improve the infant mortality Black/white ratio by 15 percent to achieve a ratio of 2.3 Black infant deaths for every one white infant death.

Indicators	2017 Metric	2018 Metric	2019 Metric	2020 Metric	2023 Goal
Infant Mortality Rate/1,000 live births	6.8	6.6	6.4	6.8	5.8
Low Birthweight	8.8%	8.5%	8.8%	9.0%	7.8%
Preterm Birth	10.2%	10.0%	10.3%	10.2%	9.4%
Sleep Related Infant Death Rate/ 1,000 live births	0.9*	1.2*	1.2*	1.3*	0.8*
Severe Maternal Morbidity Rate/ 10,000 delivery hospitalizations	168.9	175.7	194.3	211.3	130
Pregnancy Related Maternal Mortality Ratio/ 100,000 live births	11.5 (2016 data)	9.9 (2017 data)	10.9 (2018 data)	(Data not yet available)	7.3**

# Training, Evaluation & Compliance (TEC) Corner

## Shopping safety tips

*Cheryl Bernard, MPA*

With holiday shopping upon us, here are some important safety tips to keep in mind. Each of these could help you avoid danger and theft in-person and online.

### In-Person:

- Stay alert and be aware of what is going on around you.
- Park in a well-lighted space and be sure to lock the car, close the windows and hide evidence of prior shopping in the trunk (this should be done prior to leaving the previous location).
- Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Shopping with checks or a single credit card is best. In the event you are robbed, you can cancel the checks and only have to worry about canceling one credit card.
- If you must carry a purse, carry it with the straps across your body (not hanging on one shoulder) and with the closure facing in towards you. A zipped, buckled or snapped bag works best. When possible, keep your method of payment and ID separate from your purse and secured close to your body (in an inside coat pocket or front pant pocket) and only take it out when you are ready to pay for your purchase.
- When returning to your car have your keys/key fob in hand but don't unlock your vehicle until you are ready to enter it.
- As you approach your vehicle, use the light on your phone or a flashlight to look under it. When at the vehicle, look around it and inside before getting in.
- Put shopping bags in your trunk.
- Don't touch any fliers or items left on your windshield or stuck indoors.
- Back out carefully and stay aware leaving the parking lot.

### Online Shopping:

- Even though you feel you are safe in the comfort of your own home shopping, stay alert and be aware. If the deal looks too good to be true, it probably is. Verify it is a legitimate link/online store before entering your personal/credit information.
- Avoid using debit cards online, they are hard to dispute and reimbursements for fraud may be more difficult than with credit cards.
- Refrain from using public Wi-Fi.
- Shop on sites where the URL starts with "https" and not just "http". The "s" means the site is more secure.

Unfortunately, we live in a time where some people are working hard to create the next scam and steal from us both in person and in cyberspace. While nothing is 100% secure, it is our hope that these tips will help you have a happier and safer holiday shopping experience. Have a great and safe holiday!



It is with great sadness that we announce the passing of former WIC Director, Stan Bien on Friday, September 2 after battling a rare and incurable cancer over the last year. Stan was an amazing man, leader and ambassador for the WIC program both in Michigan and nationally, serving for several years on the NWA board. He pioneered Michigan WIC EBT making us one of the premier WIC programs in the country. Stan was a mentor and a friend to many and will be sorely missed.

# STATE UPDATES - E-NOTICE RECAP

## **Policies and Procedures:**

- #2022-254: "Please Bear With Us" Voter Registration Poster – Poster (DCH-1311) has been updated and is available in E-Forms.
- #2022-256: WIC Coordinator Connections Call 7/20/22 Meeting Minutes – See E-Notice attachments for minutes, chat record, and slide deck.
- #2022-269: Newly Revised Policies – See E-Notice for details on updates to processing timeframes, breastfeeding and food package policies.
- #2022-272: Income Cards DCH-0322 – Available in E-Forms.
- #2022-323: Civil Rights Course FY 2022-2023 - Course ID M0500-22-23 now available on [courses.mihealth.org](https://courses.mihealth.org).
- #2022-332: Revised Michigan MI WIC Policies – See E-Notice for details on updates to risk and lead service policies.
- #2022-337: WIC Coordinator Connections Call 9/28/22 Meeting Minutes – Please see E-Notice and attachments for minutes, chat record and slide deck.
- #2022-343: 2023 Nutrition Education/Breastfeeding Time Study – Please see E-Notice for details.
- #2022-348: Michigan WIC Coordinators by County Map – [Click here to access the map](#).

## **Nutrition:**

- #2022-255: Formulary Update – Nutramigen Powder Updated Name Changes – Please see E-Notice and attachments for details.
- #2022-260: New Michigan WIC Formula Resources - *Formula Preparation for Healthy Full-Term Newborns* handout (MDHHS-1292) is now available in E-Forms. [Click here to access the Michigan WIC Formula Overview](#).
- #2022-261: Emergent Situation - Abbott Formula Recall #65: Elecare Infant/Jr Courtesy Cases, Redemption of Alternative Formulas, Store Inventories, and Formula Samples – See E-Notice for details and please refer to subsequent E-Notices with the same title, numbered sequentially, for additional formula information.
- #2022-274: Michigan WIC Formulary Not Impacted by Recall on Lyons Magnus Nutritional and Beverage Products – Please see E-Notice for details.
- #2022-292: FDA Advises Parents and Caregivers Not to Buy or Give Mother's Touch Formula to Infants – Please see E-Notice for details.
- #2022-313: Implementation of CVB Increase for October - December 2022 – Increased amounts approved through December 2022.
- #2022-319: Nutrition Education Workgroup (9/15/22) follow-up resources, NE resource shipments, and upcoming webinars – Please see E-Notice for minutes, chat record and slide deck.
- #2022-335: Emergent Situation - Abbott Formula Recall #81: Extension of Rebates & Abbott Voluntarily Recalls Certain Lots of 2 oz RTF Products - Abbott extended rebates for competitor brand infant formulas redeemed through December 31, 2022.

## **Vendor:**

- #2022-279: WIC Benefit Verification and Finding WIC Authorized Vendors – Third-party apps should not be used to check WIC benefits or locate authorized WIC vendors.
- #2022-287: Updated WIC Vendor Complaint Request form – [Click here to access the form](#).

## **Breastfeeding:**

- #2022-259: National Breastfeeding Month – Please see E-Notice for details.
- #2022-338: Breastfeeding Updates, Announcements and Fall BF Connections – Please see E-Notice for details on recorded Peer Update and 2023 Awards of Excellence. [Click here to access the newsletter](#).

## **Promotion and Retention:**

- #2022-290: September WIC News – [Click here to access the newsletter](#).
- #2022-305: Michigan WIC Client Advisory Council – Council meetings to begin January 2023.
- #2022-306: Promotion and Retention Workgroup Meeting Minutes – September 9, 2022 – Please see E-Notice and attachments for details.



# STATE UPDATES - E-NOTICE RECAP

## Events:

- #2022-266: Local Agency Staff Participants needed- 2023 WIC Conference Planning Committee – If interested in participating, please email [skwirk@michigan.gov](mailto:skwirk@michigan.gov).
- #2022-307: CTWG Minutes and Attachments – Please see E-Notice for meeting minutes and slide decks.
- #2022-334: 2023 In-Person WIC Conference Save the Date May 23-24 – Conference will take place at Amway Grand Plaza in Grand Rapids.

## Legislation and Partner Updates:

- #2022-277: Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) – WIC Local Agencies are encouraged to post an informative message about the [Affordable Connectivity Program](#).
- #2022-324: Infant Safe Sleep Awareness Month – Please see E-Notice for several safe sleep resources.
- #2022-335: National Public Health Emergency Extension – Approved WIC waivers through at least April 2023.

## Data and Systems:

- #2022-263: Referral Category Added: Baby Pantry – “Baby Pantry” has been added to the MI-WIC Individual Referrals screen.
- #2022-273: MI-WIC Release Webcast Now Available – [Click here to access the webcast](#).
- #2022-284: MI-WIC Release 9.1 Reminder – MI-WIC Release 9.1 went live August 26 – 28, 2022.
- #2022-296: MI-WIC Contract Formula Conversion Project – Please see E-Notice for details.
- #2022-298: New Resource- WIC State & Local Agency Employee Separation Checklist – Please see E-Notice and attachment for details.
- #2022-299: WIC EBT Information and WIC Direct Training Resources – [Click here to access multiple resources](#).
- #2022-303: MI-WIC Release 9.2 – Risk Revisions – Please see E-Notice for details.
- #2022-342: MI-WIC Release Webcast Now Available – [Click here to access the webcast](#).

## Encouraging Words

“This is my second time participating in WIC. My first child was born in Georgia and received WIC benefits then, and for roughly a year and a half after moving to Michigan. Out of any program I've been involved with, Ingham County WIC has been the kindest and most welcoming. It is SO refreshing to see the participants, myself included, treated well and not like we are less than for being in a lower income bracket. The education is kind, and the employees are relatable and understanding. The empathy doesn't go unnoticed.”

- Michigan WIC Client Advisory Council Applicant

“I spoke with a client for their child's 1-year appointment. She was sharing how appreciative of the WIC program she is. She is a first-time mom and was scared about being a mom because she didn't know anything but has found the program really helpful. She shared the online lessons with her partner to help educate him too. She also applied for the advisory board!”

- Washtenaw WIC Staff Member

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Questions/Comments  
E-mail: JacksonW6@michigan.gov



PLEASE  
PLACE  
STAMP  
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## UPCOMING EVENTS/TRAININGS/WORKGROUPS

### January

10-12: Breastfeeding Basics  
13: Promotion & Retention Workgroup  
31: CPA Training

### February

1: CPA Training Cont.  
2: WIC Management Eval Webcast  
8-9: Clerical Training  
22: Advanced CPA Training

### March

7-8: Senior Peer Counselor Training  
9: Nutrition Education Workgroup  
14-16: Breastfeeding Basics  
16: Exploring Hispanic Culture webinar  
28: Lab Training  
29: Anthro Training

**Visit MPHI to sign up  
for trainings!**

Note: Training dates are sometimes adjusted.  
Please be sure to verify training information on  
MPHI's WIC Events Calendar, as this list may not  
reflect the final schedule.

**This institution is an equal opportunity provider.**