Nutrition Promotion and Support

for Nutrition Services Support Staff

WIC MICHIGAN

Michigan Department of Health and Human Services—WIC Program
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Contents

Training Overview

Purpose

To provide nutrition support staff with the knowledge to confidently promote and support the nutrition services offered as part of the WIC Program's benefits package.

Objectives

After completing this module, the learner will be able to:

1. Explain the purpose of nutrition education and counseling in WIC.
2. Describe support staff's role in promoting and supporting nutrition services.
3. List the types of WIC nutrition education offered at local agencies and clinics.
4. Relate WIC Foods with nutrients and health messages.
5. Provide client-centered responses to frequently asked questions about food and nutrition services.

Introduction

Nutrition education is the program benefit that sets WIC apart from other nutrition assistance programs. In addition to receiving food benefits and referrals, clients have an opportunity to learn about nutrition and health and how it relates to them.

They often learn about leading healthy lifestyles, preparing nutritious meals and snacks, practicing safe food handling techniques, using effective feeding strategies for children, finding easy ways to add in physical activity, and breastfeeding.

As part of the WIC team, you play an essential role in promoting and supporting the added value and benefit of WIC nutrition education and counseling.

Lets get started!

What Food and Nutrition Means!

Let's begin by exploring your relationship with food and nutrition. Take a moment and think of your most memorable eating experience. What foods did you eat? What was the setting? What made it different or special? Describe it below, then share your story with a partner.

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Connecting Food with Nutrition

Food connects us with family and friends, tradition, and culture. It excites, soothes, and nourishes. When friends and families share meals, it creates a social experience with pleasant memories. Connecting food with nutrition and health, and focusing on growth may not seem exciting. We prefer taking in the flavors, smells, and textures of foods surrounding a pleasurable eating experience over counting food groups, measuring portion sizes, or considering lower sugar and fat options. WIC staff can help families improve their health and well-being while enjoying the pleasure and happy memories associated with food.

WIC Foods Focus on Nutrition and Eating Patterns

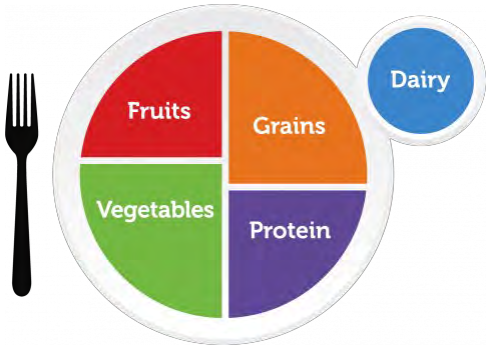
When clients shop for WIC foods they think about their family's eating patterns, not so much about nutrients. Creating a relationship between the two is simple for some and complex for others. Clients and caregivers may ask you questions because they struggle to find ways to fit WIC foods into their meals and lifestyle. Sometimes their questions are as simple as identifying authorized WIC foods at the grocery store. Other times their food-related questions require the services of nutrition professionals. The good news is that every WIC agency has support staff and nutritionists available to help clients connect nutritious WIC foods with their eating patterns.

Let's take a closer look at what nutrition means!

What Food and Nutrition Means!—-Continued

Our bodies are amazing! When we eat foods, our bodies digest them into tiny chemical compounds called nutrients. It takes over 40 nutrients to keep our bodies nourished and functioning properly. Most of these nutrients come from the variety of foods we eat.

Understanding how all these nutrients work is very complex, so researchers and policymakers developed *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* and *Start Simple with MyPlate* to help Americans make better food choices. The *Dietary Guidelines for Americans* also describes ways to promote health and reduce the risk for chronic diseases through improved nutrition and physical activity. The *Start Simple with MyPlate* focuses on what and how much to eat using a familiar mealtime visual with the five food groups. *MyPlate Kitchen* provides creative recipe ideas and options to build personal cookbooks.



A balanced eating pattern combines the right amounts of **fruits**, **vegetables**, **grains**, **dairy**, and **protein** without adding lots of sugars, fat, and sodium. Half your plate should be **fruits** and **vegetables**. They are packed with fiber, vitamins, and minerals and are naturally low in fat and calories. Half your **grains** should be whole grains, which add fiber and contain naturally occurring vitamins and minerals. **Dairy** foods provide protein and are excellent sources of calcium and vitamin D.

Protein foods such as meat, poultry, fish, dry beans, peas, eggs, nuts, and seeds supply protein, B vitamins, iron, and zinc. Lean meat, poultry without skin, fish, beans, and peas contain lower amounts of saturated fats and cholesterol. Generally, processed meats add extra saturated fat and sodium, which should be limited. To learn more visit **MyPlate.gov**. Get started by downloading the **Start Simple with MyPlate app.**

How Does WIC Promote Healthy Eating Patterns?

From the food groups, policymakers identified certain nutritious foods necessary for growth and development that would benefit WIC infants, children, and pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women. That's why the WIC Program is called the ***Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children.*** Watch this video to learn more about WIC! ***WIC Overview***

What Food and Nutrition Means!—Continued

Though you won't need to know these for your job, learning essential nutrients in WIC foods can help you better understand the value of promoting and supporting nutrition services. This table shows the connection between WIC foods and the nutrients they provide for growth and development.

WIC Foods	Key Nutrients
Fresh fruits and vegetables Beans, lentils and peas Juices Infant fruits and vegetables	Dietary Fiber Folic acid (folate) Potassium Vitamin A Vitamin C
Milk Yogurt Cheese Soy beverage	Protein Calcium Phosphorus Potassium Vitamin D
Whole grains—oatmeal, brown rice, whole wheat/ whole grain pasta, breads, buns, and tortillas Hot and cold cereals Infant cereals	Dietary Fiber Iron B Vitamins—thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, folate Magnesium Selenium
Peanut butter Canned fish Eggs Beans, lentils and peas Infant meats	Protein B vitamins Iron Vitamin E Zinc Magnesium Seafood—Omega-3 fatty acids

There are some nutrients of particular interest for WIC clients because they are needed for good health and during periods of growth. These include:

- Calcium for strong bones and teeth and to maintain normal blood pressure and heartbeat.
- Iron for healthy blood cells.
- Folic acid for making new blood cells and preventing neural tube defects.
- Sodium because we tend to add too much to foods.

Learning to eat nutritious foods for health and growth is why WIC provides nutrition education!

What is Nutrition Education?

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) Nutrition Service Standards state the goal of nutrition education — to emphasize the relationship between nutrition, physical activity, and health, as well as assist in achieving a positive change in dietary and physical activity habits resulting in improved nutritional status and the prevention of nutrition-related problems.

The Michigan WIC Policy defines nutrition education as a process of providing relevant information and strategies for clients to help them manage or modify their lifestyle choices to improve health behaviors and outcomes.

Check out this video about WIC nutrition education! ***WIC Nutrition Education***

After watching the video, you can discuss your thoughts with a supervisor, manager or partner.

I Liked That!

Write one or more facts about WIC nutrition that you liked or learned from the video.

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Types of Nutrition Education

WIC clients are offered nutrition education at least once every three months during a certification period. Competent Professional Authorities (CPAs) and Registered Dietitians (RDs) use client-centered service techniques and tailor nutrition education to each client's needs and concerns. Nutrition education is provided face-to-face or remotely at certification and recertification/evaluation appointments. WIC agencies offer interim nutrition education between appointments.

Interim Nutrition Education

There are a variety of interim nutrition education options for WIC clients. Depending on their health status, nutrition issues, and preferences, clients may participate in one or more types of nutrition education.

Let's review nutrition education available at WIC agencies!

Your WIC agency may offer some or all of these options to clients.

Individual Nutrition Education

A CPA or RD provides nutrition education to one person either in-person or by using a secure phone, audio, or video connection.

Group Nutrition Education

Group nutrition education uses a planned lesson directed to a group of clients interested in a topic with qualified staff. During a facilitated group discussion clients have an opportunity to problem-solve ways to improve their health and nutrition status in a group setting.

Breastfeeding Education and Support

Breastfeeding problem-solving, education, and counseling provides support for mothers and babies.

Nutrition Counseling with the Registered Dietitian

This nutrition counseling is an interactive process between a client, often high risk, and an RD. It involves a complete nutrition assessment, then the client and the RD create an individual care plan. WIC staff must offer every client with at least one high-risk condition or receiving a Class III formula an opportunity to receive nutrition counseling.

Types of Nutrition Education — Continued

Self-Directed Nutrition Education

A client may choose and independently complete nutrition education at their own pace, including any of the following options.

Internet

wichealth.org offers over 50 online, interactive nutrition modules in English and Spanish. It is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Users create their accounts and choose topics of interest. Each module directs users to links for information and resources based on their responses to questions or comments.

Nutrition Education/Information Mall

Clients can choose from a collection of nutrition education topics located at their clinic, usually in nutrition education lesson binders or displays.

Take-Home Lessons

Some agencies offer clients opportunities to complete their interim nutrition education using nutrition education lessons to complete at home.

Kiosks, Computers, and Tablets

Some agencies or clinics provide devices such as kiosks, computers, or tablets to help clients access and complete nutrition education lessons during their visit.

I Didn't Know That!

Take a break and talk to your supervisor, manager or other WIC staff at your agency or clinic about nutrition education offerings. Write down something you didn't know:

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Nutrition Education and Project FRESH

Every summer between June and October, WIC clients can participate in **WIC Project FRESH.** It is a unique way for clients to access more fresh fruits and vegetables directly from authorized farmers' markets and promote agriculture in Michigan.

How Does WIC Project FRESH Work?

Coupons are available to eligible WIC clients to buy locally grown, fresh, unprepared fruits, vegetables from WIC authorized farmers, farmers' markets, and roadside stands. Michigan farmers who participate in WIC Project FRESH accept coupons from clients in exchange for locally grown foods.

Is Nutrition Education for WIC Project FRESH Different?

The nutrition education component for Project FRESH provides clients with information focused on seasonality, characteristics, and the nutritional value of fresh fruits and vegetables. Nutrition education may also include proper selection, use, preservation, and preparation of fresh produce. Clients can complete their Project FRESH nutrition education through a variety of interim nutrition education options. Agencies or clinics may also offer nutrition education through exhibits, food demos, and taste testing at farmer's markets.

That's New to Me! How Can I Promote Project FRESH?

Highlight or underline Project FRESH facts that are new to you. Talk to your supervisor, manager, or partner about ways you can promote Project FRESH.

Promoting and Supporting Nutrition Services

Every interaction with a WIC client is an opportunity to promote and support nutrition services — nutrition education and counseling. Competent professional authorities (CPAs) and registered dietitians (RDs) focus on providing direct nutrition services. They determine the appropriate method and content of nutrition education for each client. Support staff play a key role by assisting CPAs in certifying eligible clients and communicating program requirements in a client-centered environment. When you welcome a WIC client at their initial visit, you impact every new face. You are WIC's *director of first impression*.

How to Support Nutrition Services

To be most effective in promoting nutrition services with clients, follow your agency's guidance. Talk to your supervisor or manager about the protocols you need to follow and the promotional materials your agency uses.

Often clients receive information about nutrition education and counseling offerings during their WIC appointment from CPAs and RDs. You can support nutrition services by scheduling times for group classes or counseling and referring clients to CPAs or RDs when they have nutrition and health-related questions. As a follow-up, you may verify the completion of nutrition education or reschedule missed appointments.

Focus on These Goals

1. Support and encourage clients throughout enrollment and certification to improve their nutrition and health.
2. Use good customer service skills—eye contact and respectful, encouraging words—to show you care.

How can I promote and support nutrition services?

Identify something you can do to promote and support nutrition. Write your goal and share it with your supervisor, manager, or partner.

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Positive Messages to Support Nutrition Services

Nutrition education and counseling provide a way for clients to learn new information and skills. They learn that nutrition is important, worthwhile, and fun. Clients and caregivers become more empowered to make positive changes for themselves and their families. Support staff impact clients and the clinic environment in many ways. Your approach with clients — word choice, tone, and mannerisms — affects everyone around you.

Let's explore ways you can respond to clients when they come to you with issues.

Client Issue	*Support Staff Response*
The caregiver of an infant has a nutrition or health question, such as, "My baby is gassy and spits up a lot. What should I do?	That is a good question. We have a nutritionist who can talk to you about your concerns.
After measuring an infant, the parent asks, "How's he growing?"	Every baby grows differently. The nutritionist will review their growth results with you shortly.
After measuring hemoglobin/lead, the parent or caregiver asks, "Is that result good?"	That's a good question. The nutritionist will review the results with you.

Think About It!

What are some messages you can use to promote and support nutrition? Write them below.

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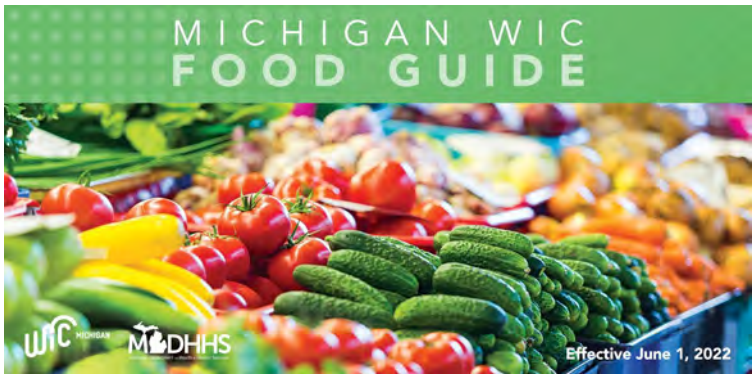
WIC Food Guide, Food Packages, and Shopping Lists

Why are some foods allowed? And others are not?

Policymakers identified specific foods to fill a nutrition role for each client category. These foods supply nutrients for growth and development. Not all foods in the same food group contain the same nutrients or cost the same. Some foods are not widely available.



Policy makers identified nutritious foods based on research recommendations for pregnant, lactating, and postpartum women, and developing and growing infants and young children. WIC clients are issued food benefits with nutritious foods based on those recommendations.

Shopping for Michigan WIC foods can be a challenge, especially when some foods of the same type are allowed while others are not. In some food categories, only brand names are allowed, whereas some only allow generic brands; other categories allow both. You can be supportive and offer to help WIC clients understand the ***Food Guide*** to make their shopping experience easier.

Did you know the *Food Guide* is on the WIC Connect App?

Clients can access the ***Food Guide***, their *WIC Shopping List, track WIC benefits,* and identify WIC foods with the UPC scan feature using the Michigan **WIC Connect** app. Knowing how to navigate the app can relieve the uncertainty and confusion clients sometimes face at the store. If you have not already explored the **WIC Connect** app features, download the app and browse!

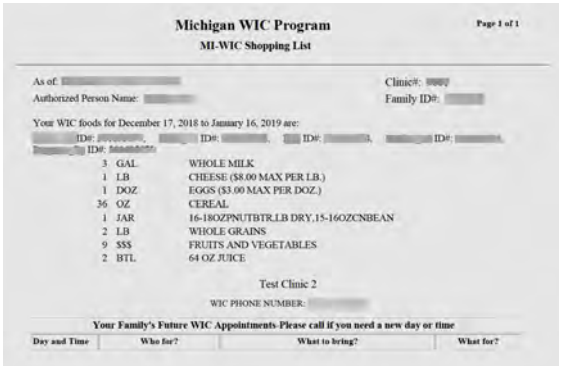
Break Time

Now is a great time to talk to your manager or supervisor about your role in supporting clients who have questions about their *Shopping List,* the ***Food Guide,*** and finding WIC foods at the store.

FAQs — Food Packages, Shopping Lists, Nutrition Questions

The ***Food Guide*** and *Shopping List* have many details — package sizes, containers, weights, and more. Generally, CPAs and RDs answer client questions about food package changes, substitutions, and nutrition. Support staff often help clients read and understand their *Shopping List* and how to use the ***Food Guide***. Knowing what to say or when to refer questions to other WIC staff can help you focus on giving clients the best service possible.

Answers for Clients!



Michigan WIC Program

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MI-WIC Shopping List

As of:

Clinic#:

Authorized Person Name:

Family ID#:

Your WIC foods for December 17, 2018 to January 16, 2019 are:

ID#: ID#: ID#: ID#: ID#:

3	GAL	WHOLE MILK
1	LB	CHEESE ($8.00 MAX PER LB.)
1	DOZ	EGGS ($3.00 MAX PER DOZ.)
36	OZ	CEREAL
1	JAR	16-18OZPNUTBTR,LB DRY,15-16OZCNBEAN
2	LB	WHOLE GRAINS
9	$$$	FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
2	BTL	64 OZ JUICE

Test Clinic 2

WIC PHONE NUMBER:

Your Family's Future WIC Appointments-Please call if you need a new day or time

Day and Time	Who for?	What to bring?	What for?

Why did my food package change? Why do my benefits change when my baby is six months old? Why can't I get meat for a one-year-old? Or myself? Why is fish not part of the pregnancy package?

WIC planners designed food packages with specific foods and amounts for women, infants, and children to meet nutritional needs. Food packages change when you or your child's category changes to adjust for growth and nutritional needs.

Can I substitute other food items for ones I don't like? Like fish? Or milk?

Other WIC staff can customize food packages to substitute certain foods. Would you like to speak with the nutritionist about your options?

What happens if I don't purchase all the foods on my *Shopping List*? Can my benefits roll over to the next month?

The foods on your *Shopping List* are issued for one-month intervals and do not roll over to the next month.

When should I start my baby on solids? What is a good weight for my baby?

Knowing what to do as babies grow can be a challenge. It sounds like you are concerned about your baby's growth and what foods to give them. Would you like to speak to a nutritionist?

What are some healthy snack choices? How can I use portion control for weight loss?

Making changes in health and nutrition can be difficult. Would you like to have a nutritionist or registered dietitian help you plan some healthy snacks and discuss portion sizes?

Buying Cash Value Fruits and Vegetables

Women and children receive cash value benefits—a certain amount of money—for fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables. You can remind clients to read the helpful tips in the ***Food Guide*** about which foods are **Allowed** and **Not Allowed.**

Fruits and vegetables provide essential nutrients, such as vitamin A, vitamin C, folic acid, fiber, and potassium. They taste good, too. To get more for their money, clients can choose lower-priced foods. Those who prefer organic can stock up on their favorites.

As you go through the ***Food Guide***, locate the **Health Bite** boxes with red apples. These nutrition and health messages encourage clients to make healthy lifestyle changes. Take a look at the one below.

Health Bite

All fruits and vegetables are filled with nutrients and are good for you.

It doesn't matter if they are fresh, frozen or canned. As long as you eat them, you are making a healthy choice!

Fresh: Eat "as is" for snacks or meals, with little to no prep needed.

Canned & Frozen: Easy to store and stock up, with a long shelf life.

Fun fact: Frozen fruits and vegetables are picked at the peak of ripeness, saving all the flavor and nutrients for when you are ready to eat them!

Take it with you: Consider fresh options or fruit cups when eating on the go!

FAQs — Answers for Clients!

Why are there so many limitations for fruits and vegetables?

The **Allowed** and **Not Allowed** listings help shoppers choose WIC foods to help contain cost and focus on nutrition. WIC policymakers decide the maximum amounts for fruits and vegetables.

Why can't I get more money for fresh fruits and vegetables? Or substitute more money for fruits and vegetables instead of juice? Or another food item?

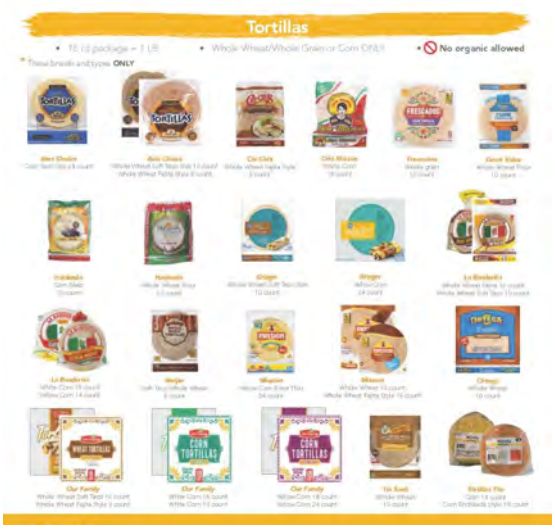
You are not alone. Many would like an increase in the cash value benefit for fruits and vegetables. You cannot substitute juice or other foods for the cash value of fruits and vegetables. Buying fresh fruits and vegetables in season and looking for sales for fresh, frozen, and canned items will help stretch your food dollars.

Whole Grains

Whole grains are part of the food package for some categories of clients — children, pregnant women, and breastfeeding women. Non-breastfeeding, postpartum women do not receive the whole grains option when they change from the pregnant woman category. Policymakers decided the nutrient needs of pregnant and breastfeeding women were generally higher than for non-breastfeeding, postpartum women and added whole grains.

Why Whole Grains?

Whole grains are important sources of many nutrients such as dietary fiber, several B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium, and selenium). Grains provide many nutrients for the health and maintenance of our bodies.

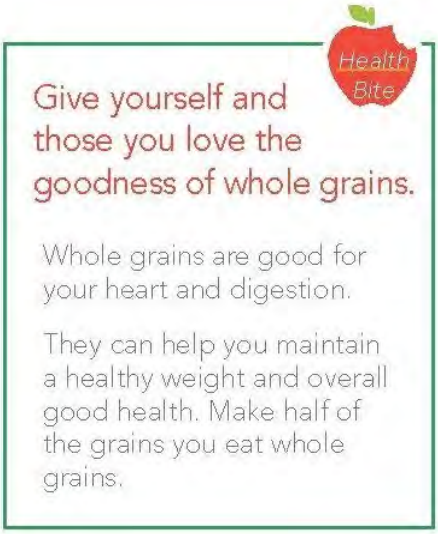


Whole Grains

Selecting whole grains can be a challenge for clients. There are so many options — oatmeal, brown rice, pasta, bread, buns, and tortillas. You can encourage clients to keep it simple and pay attention to brand names and package sizes. For every one pound (16 ounces) of whole grain on their *Shopping List,* they can buy any of the following from a list of brand names or allowed specifications. You can remind clients that the six ways to select **1 LB (pound)** of whole grains are:

1 loaf of bread	1 package of pasta
1 package of buns	1 container of oatmeal
1 package of tortillas	1 bag/box of brown rice (14-16 ounces)

You can point clients to the **Health Bite** message in the ***Food Guide*** that encourages them to make at least half of their grains whole grains.



FAQs — Answers for Clients!

Why can't I get whole grains in my food package? Why can't non-breastfeeding, postpartum women get whole grains?

Whole grains are an added food option for growing children and pregnant and breastfeeding women. Would you like to talk to a nutritionist about other whole grain options in your food package?

Why can't I get pita bread?

Pita bread is not a WIC authorized food. Would you like to talk to a nutritionist about other whole grains options that might work for you?

Cereals — Hot and Cold

Both hot and cold cereals — common breakfast foods — add fiber, iron, plus several B vitamins and minerals. Some cereals are fortified with even more vitamins and minerals to jump-start a healthy day.

Folic acid is especially important for women of childbearing age because it can prevent neural tube defects. Some cereals are fortified with 100% of the Recommended Dietary Allowance for folic acid.

Cereals with high amounts of whole grains are a good source of fiber and have a whole grain symbol beside their image in the ***Food Guide***.

Adding Up to 36!

Sometimes adding up 36 ounces can be a challenge when choosing cereal package sizes. You can remind clients they can use the combinations shown in the ***Food Guide*** to add up the ounces and max their package. They can shop for favorite cereals or try different ones to add variety.

Breakfast is so important and cereals are a breakfast classic. The **Health Bite** messages suggest that parents and caregivers start their child's day with breakfast to encourage focus and learning.

Cereals — Hot and Cold Cereals

Did you miss any?

Do you know all the store brands available in your area? Circle the ones you know. Check with your supervisor/manager or other WIC staff to be sure you identified them all.

Cold Cereals - Store Brands

• 12 oz or larger • No organic allowed

* These brands and flavors **ONLY**

Always Save
- Corn Flakes
- Frosted Shredded Wheat
- Toasted Oats

Best Choice
- Bran Flakes
- Crispy Rice
- Crispy Rice Squares
- Crispy Corn and Rice Cereal
- Corn Crisp
- Crunchy Corn Squares
- Crispy Hexagons
- Crunchy Wheat Biscuits
- Frosted Shredded Wheat
- Happy O's
- Honey Oat Clusters
- Honey Oat Clusters with Almonds
- Maple Brown Sugar Frosted Bites
- Rice Crisp
- Strawberry Frosted Mini Wheats
- Wheat Crisps

Essential Everyday
- Bran Flakes
- Corn Flakes
- Crunchy Corn Squares
- Crispy Rice
- Crispy Rice Squares
- Crispy Hexagons
- Honey Oats and Flakes
- Toasted Oats

Great Value
- Crunchy Corn Squares
- Crispy Rice Squares

Hy-Top
- Bran Flakes
- Corn Flakes
- Crispy Rice
- Shredded Wheat Frosted Bites
- Toasted Oats

IGA
- Frosted Shredded Wheat

Kiggins
- Bran Flakes
- Corn Flakes
- Crispy Rice
- Rolling Oats

Kroger
- Crispy Rice Squares
- Honey Crisp Medley with Almonds
- Oat Squares
- Rice Bitz

Meijer
- Bran Flakes
- Corn Flakes
- Crispy Rice
- Crispy Rice Squares
- Crunchy Corn Squares
- Crunchy Wheat Squares
- Oats and More with Almonds
- Oats and More with Honey
- Oat Squares

Our Family
- Bran Flakes
- Corn Flakes
- Corn Biscuits
- Crispy Hexagons
- Crispy Rice
- Crispy Rice Squares
- Crunchy Corn Squares
- Frosted Shredded Wheat
- Oats and More with Almonds
- Oats and More with Honey
- Rice Biscuits
- Toasted Oats

Parade
- Corn Flakes
- Crisp Rice
- Toasted Oats

Eggs

Eggs have been an excellent protein source worldwide for centuries. One large egg supplies about 80 calories and is loaded with nutrients, including:

- Protein
- Fat
- Vitamin A
- Folic acid (folate)
- B vitamins
- Selenium

Eggs (1 dozen packages) that are any size with white shells only and not organic are allowed. Eggs can be cage-free, too. You can remind clients to read the **Allowed** and **Not Allowed** sections for more details to help shop for WIC authorized eggs.

Breastfeeding

The WIC Program promotes breastfeeding as the best method for feeding infants. WIC mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their infants for at least the first year unless medically contraindicated. The health benefits of breastfeeding affect both the baby and mom. Moms and babies who partially or exclusively breastfeed receive large WIC food packages to meet nutritional needs and breastfeeding support. You can support breastfeeding by directing clients to breastfeeding support staff when they need help.

FAQs—Answers for Clients!

How often do babies need to breastfeed?

Every baby is different when it comes to breastfeeding.

Would you like to speak to a breastfeeding specialist about breastfeeding your baby?

How will my benefits change if I go from full-time to part-time breastfeeding? Can I still get the same breastfeeding package? Can I decide how much formula I want if I am part-time breastfeeding?

You can expect to receive many of the same foods. Full-time breastfeeding moms receive a larger food package than others. Would you like to speak with the breastfeeding specialist or nutritionist about breastfeeding and your food package?

Why do breastfed babies get more baby food than formula fed babies?

Breastmilk is less expensive than formula, so breastfed babies get more in their food packages.

More WIC Foods for Moms and Babies Who Breastfeed

The money saved by moms breastfeeding their babies allows both to receive more nutritious WIC foods. It is important to point out that moms receive WIC foods for an entire year when they choose to breastfeed exclusively or partially. They receive WIC foods for only six months if not breastfeeding.

Look at the figure below to see how much more moms and babies get every month when they exclusively breastfeed vs. partially breastfeed vs. not breastfeeding. Breastfeeding means more food and cost-benefit for the whole family!

Breastfeeding Moms and Babies Receive More Food!

How Does WIC Support Breastfeeding?

- Peer Counselors are available when you need them, by phone or text, including outside of regular clinic hours.
- All WIC staff are trained to support breastfeeding families.
- WIC clients have free, unlimited access to Lactation Consultants and Breastfeeding Peer Counselors.
- Breastfeeding moms get more WIC foods than non-breastfeeding moms, including canned fish.
- Breastfeeding moms not only get more food, they are also able to stay on the program longer.
- At 6 months, breastfed babies receive infant meats and more fruits and vegetables.

Fish

Fish is available for exclusively breastfeeding mothers who enjoy a lot of extra foods compared to moms who do not fully breastfeed. Fish provides many nutrients, including protein, B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B6), vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium. Fish is also rich in omega-3 fatty acids, EPA, and DHA, necessary for growth and development.

Fish

- **ONLY for exclusively breastfeeding women**
- Any size, can or foil pouch, up to a total of 30 oz per month

✓ ALLOWED

- Any brand or type of chunk light tuna, mackerel, sardines or pink salmon
- Packed in water or oil
- Added sauces and flavorings, such as tomato sauce, mustard or lemon
- May include bones or skin

NOT ALLOWED

- **Organic**
- Albacore/solid white tuna, Atlantic or sockeye (red or blueback) salmon, prime or smoked salmon fillets, king mackerel
- Lunch packs, lunch kits or tuna salad
- Premium brands, like Blue Harbor and Wild Planet
- Fresh or frozen

You may combine fish types, packages and sizes.

FAQs — Answers for Clients!

Can I get more of something else if I don't like tuna?

If you don't like tuna, you can get mackerel, sardines, or pink salmon. You can combine any size can or pouch up to 30 oz per month.

Infant Foods — Infant Cereals, Fruits & Vegetables

When infants start eating solid foods, they experience new flavors and textures while developing their fine motor skills. The WIC food package allows them to enjoy the nutrients packed in infant cereals, fruits, and vegetables.

Infant cereals are significant sources of many nutrients, including dietary fiber, B vitamins (thiamin, riboflavin, niacin, and folate), and minerals (iron, magnesium and selenium). Fruits and vegetables also supply many nutrients, including potassium, dietary fiber, folate (folic acid), vitamins A and C.

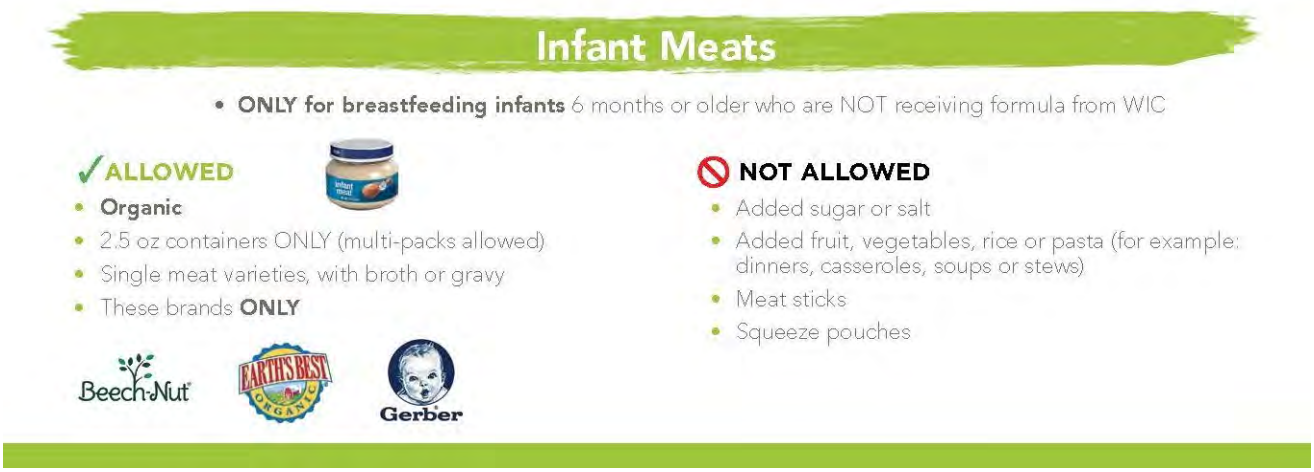
With infant cereals, clients can choose 8-ounce or 16-ounce containers of allowed brands, without added fruit, formula DHA/ARA, probiotics, or non-cereal ingredients. Infant fruits and vegetables are available for 6 through 11 months old infants only. They are limited to allowed brands in 1-ounce, 2-ounce, or 4-ounce sizes. You can remind parents and caregivers to read the **Allowed** and **Not Allowed** instructions while shopping at the store for these WIC foods.

Infant Foods — Infant Meats

Breastfeeding infants *not receiving formula from WIC* can receive infant meats when they reach 6 months old. The infant meat choices allowed can be organic and allowed brands in 2.5 ounce containers with single meat varieties in broth or gravy.

Infant meats provide building blocks for growth and development. Nutrients include:

- Protein
- B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B6)
- Vitamin E
- Iron
- Zinc
- Magnesium



FAQs — Answers for Clients!

My doctor told me I could start baby foods at four months. Why do I have to wait until my baby is six months old to get WIC baby foods?

WIC encourages waiting to start baby foods at six months. Would you like to speak to a nutritionist about your baby food package? Or about options for feeding your baby?

Why can't I get dinners for baby foods?

Infant foods are limited to the specific types in 2.5-ounce sizes listed in the ***Food Guide***. Would you like to review the ***Food Guide***?

Peanut Butter and Beans

Peanut butter, beans, lentils, and peas are excellent sources of protein for women and children. They are also excellent sources of fiber, B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B6), vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium. These protein sources are building blocks for bones, muscles, skin, blood, and the immune system.

You can help clients understand how to shop for the Peanut Butter & Bean choices by showing them the three images in the ***Food Guide.*** Their *Shopping List* may look confusing to the, and having a visual reminder in the ***Food Guide*** makes it easier to find WIC foods.

You can remind clients to review the **Allowed** and **Not Allowed** boxes for dry and canned beans, and peanut butter while shopping.

Peanut Butter and Beans

Peanut butterbeans, lentils and peas are a significant source of protein for women and children. They are also excellent sources of fiber, B vitamins (niacin, thiamin, riboflavin, and B6), vitamin E, iron, zinc, and magnesium. These protein sources are building blocks for bones, muscles, skin, blood, and the immune system.

You can help clients understand how to shop for peanut butter choices by showing them the **Allowed** and **Not Allowed** listings for peanut butter in the ***Food Guide.*** You can remind WIC families to read the **Iron in WIC Foods** section to learn about iron in foods.

Peanut Butter

✓ALLOWED

- 16-18 oz jar
- Smooth, creamy, crunchy or extra crunchy

NOT ALLOWED

- Organic
- Specialty brands, like Arrow Head Mills and Fifty50
- Peanut butter mixed with jelly, marshmallow, honey, chocolate or other flavorings
- Peanut spread or reduced fat peanut butter
- Peanut butter with DHA or Omega 3
- Natural
- Whipped

Iron in WIC Foods

Everyone needs iron for growth and development, especially children with developing brains! The WIC Food Package includes many foods high in iron, like breakfast cereal and white beans. Many other WIC foods are good sources of iron as well. These include lentils, spinach, kidney beans, sardines, chickpeas, canned stewed tomatoes and baked potatoes (medium, skin on).

Eating foods containing iron and vitamin C together can help your body better absorb the iron. Your food package has lots of foods filled with vitamin C, especially fruits like oranges, strawberries and mangoes, and vegetables like broccoli, bell peppers and tomatoes.

MEAL IDEAS:

- Offer orange slices or juice with cereal.
- Make a yogurt fruit smoothie with fresh or frozen spinach.
- Cook up eggs with spinach and bell peppers.
- Enjoy a bean & cheese taco or quesadilla with tomatoes and peppers.

Dairy Products

Milk provides health benefits — especially improved bone health. Important nutrients in milk, yogurt, and soy beverage include protein, calcium, potassium, sodium, and phosphorus. They are fortified with vitamins A and D. These major minerals—calcium potassium, sodium, and phosphorus—help regulate chemical reactions in the body, such as your heartbeat, water balance, nerve responses, and release of energy from food. They are also part of many cells, including muscle, bones, and blood.

About Dairy Choices

WIC offers a variety of dairy choices based on the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. Its focus is on lower-fat dairy choices. Fat-free, low fat, buttermilk, reduced milk, whole milk, powdered milk (nonfat dry), evaporated milk, and lactose free milk is allowed. Some clients may have allowed milk substitutions.

Babies should not drink cow's milk during the first year. However, a one-year-old should drink whole milk for brain development and growth. After they reach two years of age, most children should switch to lower fat or fat-free dairy as part of a healthy eating pattern. Sometimes clients become confused by quarts or equivalent amounts on their *Shopping List*. You can point them to the box in their ***Food Guide*** to add up quarts.

The **Health Bite** message helps WIC families understand how choosing lower fat dairy helps them have a healthy eating pattern.

FAQs — Answers for Clients!

Why can't I get whole milk? Or 2%? Or almond milk?

WIC supports lower fat milk and other dairy options for health. Almond milk is not an approved milk substitution. Would you like to speak to a nutritionist about your dairy options?

Yogurt and Cheese

Low fat dairy products and substitutes are essential sources of nutrients, either naturally or fortified — protein, calcium, vitamin D, phosphorus, and potassium. These food options are major sources to build strong bones and teeth and regulate many chemical reactions in the body. They are also lower in saturated fats and cholesterol for better health.

Yogurt

- 32 oz tubs • 4 oz 4-pack (16 oz total) • 4 oz 8-pack (32 oz total)
- 2 oz tube 8-pack (16 oz total) • 2 oz tube 16-pack (32 oz total)

✓ALLOWED

- Nonfat or low fat ONLY
- Plain or any flavor
- Fruit on the bottom

* These brands **ONLY**

ACTIVIA · Best Choice · O'BURN FARMS · DANNON · Essential EVERYDAY · Great Value · J&J · Kroger · LALA · MEHADRIN · meijer · Our Family · Prairie Farms · Yoplait

NOT ALLOWED

- **Organic**
- 2% or whole milk yogurt
- Greek yogurt
- Activia Fusion brand
- Yogurt in bottles (drinkable) or pouches
- Yogurts with separate mix-in items such as candy, granola, honey or nuts
- Artificial sweeteners (for example: aspartame, Stevia, sucralose or saccharine)

Cheese

See your WIC Shopping List for allowed maximum cheese price.

- 16 oz (1 LB) ONLY • U.S. made prepackaged cheese

✓ALLOWED

- String (without individual wrapping)
- American (without individual wrapping)
- Cheddar
- Colby
- Colby Jack (Cojack)
- Monterey Jack
- Mozzarella
- Muenster
- Provolone
- Swiss

NOT ALLOWED

- **Organic**
- Shredded, grated, cubed, crumbles, shapes or curds
- Sliced cheese, except American
- Individually wrapped cheese slices (singles), sticks or strings
- Cheese foods (for example: Velveeta)
- Cheese products, whips or spreads
- Smoked cheese or raw milk cheese
- Variety wheels or variety packs
- Cracker backers or stackers
- Cheese with pimento, peppers, seeds, meat, etc.
- Soy, farmer or goat cheese
- Fresh mozzarella
- Imported cheese

FAQs — Answers for Clients!

What kinds of yogurts are allowed? I can never pick the right ones.

The ***Food Guide*** lists the types and container sizes for **Allowed** and **Not Allowed** yogurt. How can I help you choose the right ones?

Why do I have to get cheese slices/string cheese without individual wrapping/plastic?

There are lots of **Not Allowed** instructions for cheese, even wrappings which can make shopping challenging. Fruits cannot replace cheese. Would you like to review the cheese options together?

Soy Beverage

Soy beverage is a nutritious, low-fat dairy substitute for children and women who have special nutrition needs. The WIC nutritionist may issue soy beverage as a dairy substitute, and clients will see it listed on their *Shopping List*. They can choose between several brands and flavors listed in the ***Food Guide***. To be authorized for the WIC Program, a soy beverage must be fortified or contain specific amounts of the following nutrients:

Protein	Calcium	Vitamin A	Vitamin D
Magnesium	Phosphorus	Potassium	Riboflavin
Vitamin B12			

FAQs—Answers for Clients!

Why not almond milk? Or other types of milk substitutes?

Milk substitutes such as almond milk and rice milk are not WIC authorized. Would you like to speak to a nutritionist about your options for milk substitutions?

Try to Find It!

Next time you visit your local grocery store, try to find the WIC authorized soy beverages on the shelf or in the refrigerated section.

Juices — Children and Women

Fruit and vegetable juices can add variety to a healthy eating pattern and are a good source of vitamin C. You can help clients understand how to get the maximum amount of fruit or vegetable juices by pointing out the **Tips for choosing a WIC juice** box in the ***Food Guide.***

At the store, they can look for the correct container size—64 ounces for children and 48 ounces for women or in an 11.5 - 12 ounce concentrate.

They should look on the **Nutrition Facts** label for 100% juice and at least 80% vitamin C per serving.

FAQs — Answers for Clients!

My doctor says we shouldn't give my child juice. Why is it on WIC? Why can't we substitute juice for fruits and vegetables?

Small amounts of WIC juice are a good source of vitamin C. Other foods cannot be substituted for WIC juice. Would you like to speak to a nutritionist about drinking juice?

My Take-Aways

We've covered a lot of valuable information about how you can promote and support nutrition services in WIC. You have highlighted or underlined content, watched videos, and learned new facts. You have reviewed the WIC foods, including important nutrients, key messages, and ways to respond to frequently asked questions from clients. You have shared your thoughts with other WIC staff and received information about protocols specific to your agency or clinic.

Hopefully, this has helped you to identify and define your role in promoting and supporting nutrition services.

Now it's time to put knowledge into practice.

How can you promote and support nutrition services in your work environment? What new perspective do you have on nutrition services?

What I Learned

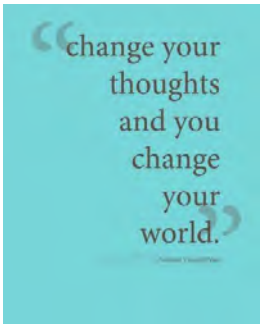
In the space below, write down the important facts, messages, discussion points, video ideas, and other experiences that have inspired you to promote and support nutrition services. Share your inspirations with others!

_____

_____

_____

_____



Certificate of Completion

The Michigan WIC Program

Recognizes

_____

For the completion of

Nutrition Promotion and Support Training

for Nutrition Services Support Staff

On (Date): _____

Trainer/Manager/Supervisor: _____

Desk Guides

WIC Food Guide—Health Bite Messages in a Nutshell

The Michigan WIC ***Food Guide*** contains **Health Bite** messages that suggest ways families can enjoy nutritious foods and develop healthy eating habits.

Fruits and Vegetables

Eat fruits and vegetables and your kids will too. They learn from watching you.

Share the adventure. Shop together and let your child choose.

Fix them together. Teach your child to tear lettuce or add vegetable toppings to pizza.

Eat together. Enjoy new fruits and vegetables at meals and snacks.

Take it with you. Show your child how fruit is a great snack to eat at the park or in the shopping mall.

Put apples, oranges or bananas in your bag for quick snacks.

Be sure to eat plenty of fresh fruits and vegetables to get more fiber in your diet.

Whole Grains

Give yourself and those you love the goodness of whole grains.

Make at least half of the grains you eat whole grains.

WIC whole grains, such as bread, tortillas and pasta can help you maintain a healthy weight and are good for your overall health.

Breakfast and Eggs

Breakfast starts the day strong!

Eating breakfast gives you and your child energy.

Without breakfast, you and your child may feel hungry, making it hard to focus and learn.

Let them help you plan breakfast and set the table!

Egg Facts: Not just for breakfast. Packed with high quality protein. Good choice for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

Milk, Beans, Peanut Butter, Juice

Milk makes their bones and teeth strong.

Beans and peanut butter give them healthy blood and strong muscles.

Did you know? Skim, 1% or 2% milk has the same amount of vitamin D, calcium and protein as whole milk. Just less fat and fewer calories!

Small amounts of WIC juice is a good source of vitamin C.

WIC FAQs —Answers for Clients in a Nutshell

Clients often to come to WIC support staff with questions about the program, as well as, for nutrient and health questions and questions. Here are the FAQs from the training compiled for a quick reference.

Food Packages

Why did my food package change? Why can't I get meat for a one-year-old? Or myself? Why do my benefits change when my baby is six months old? Why is fish not part of the pregnancy package?

WIC planners designed food packages with specific foods and amounts for women, infants, and children to meet nutritional needs. Food packages change when you or your child's category changes to adjust to growth and your dietary needs. Would you like to speak with a nutritionist?

Can I substitute other food items for ones I don't like? Like tuna? Or milk?

The nutritionist can customize your food package to substitute certain foods. Would you like to speak with the nutritionist about your options?

What happens if I don't purchase all the foods on my *Shopping List*? Can my benefits roll over to the next month?

The foods on your *Shopping List* are for one-month intervals, and benefit can't roll over to the next month.

When should I start my baby on solids? What is a good weight for my baby?

Knowing what to do as babies grow can be a challenge. It sounds like you are concerned about your baby's growth and what foods to give him/her. Would you like to speak to a nutritionist?

What are some healthy snack choices? How can I use portion control for weight loss?

Making changes in health and nutrition can be difficult. Would you like to have a nutritionist or registered dietitian help you plan healthy snacks and portion sizes?

FAQs —Answers for Clients in a Nutshell

Fruits and Vegetables

Why are there so many limitations for fruits and vegetables?

The **Allowed** and **Not Allowed** listings help shoppers choose WIC foods to help contain cost and focus on nutrition. WIC policymakers decide the maximum amounts for fruits and vegetables.

Why can't I get more money toward fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables? Or substitute more money for fruits and vegetables instead of juice? Or another food item?

You are not alone. Many would like an increase in the cash value benefit amount for fruits and vegetables. You cannot substitute juice or other foods for fruits and vegetables. Buying fresh fruits and vegetables in season and looking for sales for fresh, frozen and canned fruits and vegetables can help stretch your food dollars.

Whole Grains

Why can't I get whole grains in my food package? Why can't non-breastfeeding, postpartum (NPP) women get whole grains? Or whole wheat bread?

Whole grains is an added food option for growing children, pregnant and breastfeeding women. Would you like to talk to a nutritionist about other whole grain options in your food package?

Why can't I get pita bread?

Pita bread is not a WIC authorized food. Would you like to talk to a nutritionist about other whole grains options that might work for you?

FAQs —Answers for Clients in a Nutshell

Breastfeeding

How often do babies need to breastfeed?

Every baby is different when it comes to breastfeeding. Would you like to speak to a breastfeeding specialist about breastfeeding your baby?

How will my benefits change if I go from full-time to part-time breastfeeding? Can I still get the same breastfeeding package? Can I decide how much formula I want if I am part-time breastfeeding?

You can expect to receive many of the same foods. Full-time breastfeeding moms receive a larger food package than others. Would you like to speak with the breastfeeding specialist or nutritionist about breastfeeding and your food package?

Why do breastfed babies get more baby food than formula fed babies?

Breastmilk is less expensive than formula, so full-time breastfed babies get more baby food in their food package.

Fish

Can I get more of something else if I don't like tuna?

If you don't like tuna, you can get mackerel, sardines or pink salmon. You can combine any size can or pouch up to 30 oz. per month.

Infant Foods

My doctor told me I could start baby foods at four months. Why do I have to wait until my baby is six months to get WIC baby foods?

WIC encourages waiting to start baby foods at six months of age. Would you like to speak to a nutritionist about your baby's food package? Or about options for feeding your baby?

Why can't I get baby food dinners?

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FAQs —Answers for Clients in a Nutshell

Dairy Products

Why can't I get whole milk? Or 2%? Or more cheese? Or almond milk?

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What kinds of yogurts are allowed? I can never pick the right ones.

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Why do I have to get cheese slices/string cheese without individual wrappings/plastic? Can I replace cheese with fruits?

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