

WIC Food Packages....Time for a Change

Fact Sheet

The WIC food packages are changing to better meet the nutritional needs of WIC participants. The new food packages align with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and infant feeding practice guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

Major Changes to the WIC Food Packages

New foods

- Fruits and vegetables (fresh, frozen, canned)
- Whole grain cereals and breads
- Baby foods -- fruits and vegetables for all infants and meat for exclusively breastfed infants

New alternatives (at State agency option)

- Soy beverage and tofu for milk
- Brown rice, bulgur, oatmeal, soft corn, or whole wheat tortillas for whole wheat bread
- Canned beans for dried beans
- Canned salmon, sardines, and mackerel for canned tuna

New quantities

- Quantities of milk, eggs, and juice and cheese are reduced for women and children. Juice is eliminated from infant packages. Quantities of infant formula are reduced for breastfed and older infants.



How do the new food packages provide greater consistency with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans? The rule adds fruits and vegetables, and whole grains to the packages for the first time. Reductions are made to the amounts of certain foods (milk, juice, eggs) to be more consistent with recommendations in the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and WIC's role as a supplemental nutrition program.

How do the new food packages provide greater consistency with infant feeding practice guidelines? The rule delays the introduction of complementary foods from four to six months of age and modifies infant formula amounts. Infant foods are added and juice eliminated in the packages for older infants in order to promote healthy dietary patterns.

How do the new food packages address public health nutrition-related issues? The revised food packages for women and children provide less saturated fat and cholesterol, more fiber, and fruits and vegetables. The food packages for breastfeeding infant-mother pairs provide stronger incentives for continued breastfeeding, including providing less formula to partially breastfed infants and additional quantities and types of food for breastfeeding mothers.

How do the new food packages reinforce the nutrition education messages provided to participants? The new food packages are more consistent with the nutrition education messages provided to participants, i.e., --“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.”

How do the new food packages appeal to WIC's culturally diverse populations? The new food packages provide more participant choice and a wider variety of foods than the previous food packages. Foods such as tortillas, brown rice, soy-based beverage, canned salmon, and a wide choice of fruits and vegetables will provide State agencies increased flexibility in prescribing culturally appropriate food packages.

** Refer to the full regulation at www.fns.usda.gov/wic for the complete provisions and requirements for foods in the new WIC food packages.*