

WIC Food Packages....Time for a Change

Fact Sheet for Food Manufacturers

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.



Requirements for new foods in the WIC food packages include:*

Soy beverage — Per cup, must be fortified with: 276 mg calcium; 8 g protein; 500 IU vitamin A; 100 IU vitamin D; 24 mg magnesium; 222 mg phosphorus; 349 mg potassium; 0.44 mg riboflavin; and 1.1 mcg vitamin B12.

Whole wheat and whole grain bread — *Whole wheat bread* must conform to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) standard of identity **AND** whole wheat must be the primary ingredient by weight. For *whole grain bread*, whole grain must be the primary ingredient by weight **AND** *whole grain bread* must meet labeling requirements for making a health claim as a “whole grain food with moderate fat content”:

- (1) Contain a minimum of 51% whole grains (using dietary fiber as the indicator);
- (2) Meet the regulatory definitions for “low saturated fat” at 21 CFR 101.62 (≤ 1 g saturated fat per RACC) and “low cholesterol” (≤ 20 mg cholesterol per RACC);
- (3) Bear quantitative trans fat labeling; and
- (4) Contain ≤ 6.5 g total fat per RACC and ≤ 0.5 g trans fat per RACC.

Whole grain cereal — At least half of the cereals authorized on a State agency’s food list must have whole grain as the primary ingredient by weight **AND** meet labeling requirements for making a health claim as a “whole grain food with moderate fat content”:

- (1) Contain a minimum of 51% whole grains (using dietary fiber as the indicator);
- (2) Meet the regulatory definitions for “low saturated fat” at 21 CFR 101.62 (≤ 1 g saturated fat per RACC) and “low cholesterol” (≤ 20 mg cholesterol per RACC);
- (3) Bear quantitative trans fat labeling; and
- (4) Contain ≤ 6.5 g total fat per RACC and ≤ 0.5 g trans fat per RACC.

Requirements for new foods in the WIC food packages include:*

Fruits and Vegetables — Any variety of **fresh whole or cut fruit** without added sugars; any variety of **fresh whole or cut vegetable**, except white potatoes, without added sugars, fats, or oils; any variety of **canned fruits** without added sugars, fats, oils, or salt; any variety of **frozen fruits** without added sugars; any variety of **canned or frozen vegetables**, except white potatoes, without added sugars, fats, or oils; any type of **dried fruits or dried vegetable** without added sugars, fats, oils, or salt.

Infant Foods — Any variety of single ingredient **commercial infant food fruit** without added sugars, starches, or salt (i.e., sodium), texture may range from strained through diced; any variety of single ingredient **commercial infant food vegetables** without added sugars, starches, or salt (i.e., sodium), texture may range from strained through diced; any variety of **commercial infant food meat or poultry**, as a single major ingredient, with added broth or gravy, without added sugars or salt (i.e. sodium), texture may range from pureed through diced.

**** 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.***

Determining WIC-Eligibility of Foods in the New WIC Food Packages

Procedures for determining WIC-eligibility of a food and requesting that a food be added to a State's approved WIC food list remain the same and are described below.

What are the Federal requirements for WIC-eligible foods in the new food packages?

The categories of and nutritional requirements for all WIC foods are specified by new Federal regulations governing the WIC food packages at 7 CFR Part 246.10. The new regulations were issued on December 6, 2007, and are available on the Food and Nutrition website at www.fns.usda.gov/wic. WIC-eligible foods must also comply with all applicable Federal, State, and local laws and regulations governing these foods.

How does a WIC State agency decide which WIC-eligible foods to include on its State-approved WIC food list?

WIC State agencies use the Federal regulations at 7 CFR Part 246.10 to identify foods that are acceptable for use in their Programs. State agencies are responsible for deciding which brands, types, and packaging of allowable foods they wish to include on their State WIC food lists. Decisions may be influenced by cost, product distribution within a State, participant acceptance, and administrative feasibility. State agencies are not obligated to authorize every available food that meets WIC requirements. Because WIC-eligible foods vary from State to State, a consolidated list is not available.

How does a manufacturer request a State to include a food on its State-approved WIC food list?

The following guidelines provide the general type of information needed by the State agency in order to determine WIC-eligibility status. WIC State agencies may request additional information consistent with their State-specific WIC food criteria.

Information needed for determining WIC-Eligible foods and formulas may be found at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/benefitsandservices/foodpkgevaluation.htm>

Manufacturers are advised to contact each WIC State agency for information about the procedures and timeline used to establish the State's list of WIC-authorized foods. A list of all WIC State agencies is available at www.fns.usda.gov/wic