



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

A Monthly Training Newsletter for New Food Choices 2009
April - Newsletter #2



Hello WIC Staff!

This month the Food for Thought Newsletter will focus on Washington WIC's key nutrition messages for New Food Choices and how to begin sharing the changes with your clients.

KEY NUTRITION MESSAGES FOR NEW FOOD CHOICES

WIC's new foods promote healthy lifestyles by:

- Providing healthy choices
- Offering more variety
- Supporting breastfeeding



Key messages help us to focus on what is important about the New Food Choices, that is, *healthy foods for healthy families*. Key messages provide a consistent and positive way to talk about the food package changes with clients, retailers, the medical community, and with you - WIC staff! You will begin seeing these messages on a variety of materials related to New Food Choices and you may want to start using them with your clients.

NEW FOOD CHOICES & WIC FOOD PACKAGES

In Newsletter #1, we introduced the reasons for the changes and provided web resources for you to take a closer look at the new foods. This month, we are sharing an overview of the food packages so you can see the foods your clients will receive in October. Please see the attached document, [Overview of WIC Food Packages](#). Some things to notice in this overview are the exciting new foods being added! New healthy choices include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and for some clients tofu and soy beverage. You will also see new terms that better describe breastfeeding practices and new baby foods available for infants.

You may be curious about the specific foods that have been approved within each food category. For example, have you been wondering which whole-wheat breads will be allowed? Or what types of fruits and vegetables will be permitted? Or what brands of cereals and juices clients will be able to choose in October? Then be sure to check out the Washington WIC Food list for October 2009 posted on the WIC Web site: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/WIC/materials/food/foodlist.pdf>.

What other questions do you have about the new food choices? Take a look at the Frequently Asked Questions at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/cfh/WIC/materials/food/newfoodsfaq.pdf>.

ACTIVITY

As WIC staff, YOU are the best advocates for healthy eating and active living! When you make healthy changes in your own life, you become a role model for WIC families. Discuss these questions with your WIC co-workers:

- Which of the new foods do you currently include in your family's meals?
- Which foods are you excited to learn more about?
- What recipes do you have to share for using these new foods?



SUPPORTING CLIENTS IN MAKING HEALTHY CHANGES - NOW

In preparing for the new food changes, focus groups were held around the state to ask WIC clients their thoughts about the new foods and the changes coming. There were several overarching themes, one of which was that clients understand the importance of a healthy diet for their families. They want the best choices for themselves and their children. They know that the choices they make can play a role in preventing obesity.

HERE ARE SOME WAYS TO SUPPORT YOUR CLIENTS IN MAKING THESE HEALTHY CHANGES NOW



All women and children age 2 and over will receive lower fat milk (2%, 1% or fat free). Whole milk (3.5% fat) will only be allowed for children 12 through 23 months.

- Ask clients what type of milk they use and talk with them about switching to lower fat milk. By starting this conversation, you can help clients explore this change and begin drinking lower fat milk before October.
- Ask caregivers with children age 2 and over, who are new to WIC, if they would like to have lower fat milk on their WIC checks. Helping new clients choose lower fat milk now will mean one less change for them in October.
- You can learn more about lower fat milk and helping clients make this switch by:
 - **Ordering** the new client handout: Low Fat Milk is a Healthy Choice for You and Your Family. The handout includes “3 Steps to Move to Lower Fat Milk”. It is available in English and Spanish from www.prt.wa.gov.
 - **Participating** in the Choosing Lower Fat Milk in-service. This in-service provides the opportunity to practice discussing this change using the handout described above; and allows staff to explore their own personal preferences in milk purchases.
 - **Viewing** the new module Build Strong Kids with Dairy Foods at www.wichealth.org. This module includes the nutritional benefits of dairy foods and simple ways to add low fat dairy foods into family snacks and meals. Tell clients about this module as well.



The amount of cheese for women and children will be reduced to one pound.

- States who have already implemented the new foods have reported that the switch to only one pound of cheese was not easy for clients. It may be helpful for you to start talking with clients now about how they can reduce fat in their diet by choosing less cheese and instead getting more milk (low fat, of course!). Some clients may even enjoy having more milk.
 - Clients who get more milk may want recipes or ideas about using milk. Visit www.3aday.org for tips, suggestions, ideas and recipes. Use the recipe finder to search by meal (breakfast, lunch, etc...) or by food (milk, cheese, or yogurt).
- For clients new to WIC, offer a food package with one pound of cheese. By helping clients start with one pound of cheese, they won't have to change in October. Ask if they are interested in getting a food package that has lower fat. Support your clients' choices and use client centered approaches to help them choose foods that best meet their nutritional goals.

COMING NEXT MONTH - WHOLE GRAINS!

In newsletter #3 **whole grains** will be the focus. The addition of whole grains to the WIC food package is exciting – *a bushel of fun!* Here are some things to look forward to:

- Information about whole grains – what makes whole grains a great choice for everyone?
- An exploration of the whole grain foods on the new food package - from bulgur to brown rice.
- Ideas to help clients utilize whole grains – including recipes, tips and a *whole* lot more!

SUPPORTING BREASTFEEDING

We are making changes to our policies in order to better support breastfeeding. You will get more information about these changes in the coming months, but here is a preview:

- WIC will no longer routinely supply infant formula to breastfed infants the first month of life.
- All breastfeeding moms & babies will receive a full Breastfeeding Review before any formula is issued. You will receive training materials on how to do a **Breastfeeding Review**.
- Breastfeeding women with infants over 6 months of age requesting over ½ package of formula:
 - Will no longer receive foods for themselves.
 - Will be counted as participating breastfeeding women (within a “Some Breastfeeding” category).
 - Will be given support and education to continue to breastfeed.



BREASTFEEDING MESSAGES TO SHARE WITH CLIENTS NOW

OCTOBER IS JUST 7 MONTHS AWAY!

Now is the time to talk to pregnant and breastfeeding moms about the new WIC food packages.

Here are some specific messages to promote breastfeeding *and* the new WIC food packages:

- Starting in October breastfeeding moms will get checks for the new WIC foods which include more variety of foods. We can tell moms, “If you are breastfeeding your young baby now, let us help you to continue to breastfeed so you will get all the new foods.”
- Fully breastfeeding moms will get the biggest WIC food package and therefore will save the most on their food budget. For example, fully breastfeeding moms get more fruits and vegetables as compared to postpartum moms. (\$120.00 for twelve months breastfeeding vs. \$48.00 for six months postpartum).
- Fully breastfeeding moms will get to buy salmon and/or tuna with their WIC checks.
- Breastfeeding moms will get WIC foods for a year.
- Partially breastfeeding moms will get more food than postpartum moms.
- Moms who do not breastfeed will get WIC foods for themselves only for the first six months after their babies are born. This is also the case for moms who do some breastfeeding and whose babies get more than a half a formula food package.
- At six months of age, fully breastfed infants will get the most infant foods (baby food fruits & vegetables and baby food meats).

WAYS WE SUPPORT YOU WHILE YOU SUPPORT MOMS

The state WIC office is committed to providing resources for you to continue to educate, encourage, and support women to breastfeed their babies for as long as possible.

We will:

- Continue to provide Lactation Management training and other educational activities.
- Provide training for you to learn how to do a complete Breastfeeding Review.
- Make available “Changes are Coming” flyers specifically for breastfeeding women and their babies.
- Develop and distribute a group education lesson plan to support staff conducting a breastfeeding class.
- Have breastfeeding resources accessible, such as Amy Spangler’s “Keep It Simple” available at the Department of Printing General Store.
- Provide an in-depth, self-guided training module on breastfeeding for paraprofessionals.

