THE WIC SHOPPING EXPERIENCE

Tools and techniques for talking to participants about WIC foods, checks and shopping
Foods and Checks Education

• Review WIC policy about food and check education

• Hear about participants’ and vendors’ experiences

• Explore new tools and ways to offer check education
WIC Policy

**Goal:** Assure participants have the information they need to successfully select WIC foods and use their checks at the store.

**Action:** Provide consistent and complete food and check education to every participant and caregiver.

**Review:**

a. The WIC Policy and Procedure for Check education in *Volume 1 – Chapter 22, WIC Check Education, pages 14-17*.

b. The 10 Key Points for check education on the inside cover of the WIC appointment folder or in the Shopping guide.
Our participant’s said:

“I wish there was a way to streamline checkout when shopping w/multiple checks. It really slows up the line…”

“Sometimes when I shop for my WIC, sometimes I have to get 2 or 3 of my checks at once and the clerk turns red in the face, like they don't want to take the time for me but I go along with it because I need to.”
Offering Participant-Centered Check Education

The strength we have in WIC is the individual counseling and personalized conversations that help guide our interactions. This is especially true for check education.

- **The conversation begins** during the appointment with the Competent Professional Authority (CPA) about the WIC foods and the food package.
  - For example: “Today you said you need soy beverage instead of milk. I’ll make those changes on the checks you’re getting as a pregnant mom.”

- **Once eligibility is determined** and checks are printed the check and foods education builds on what was discussed by the CPA.
  - For example, a Clerk might say: “I’ll be showing you how to shop for your WIC foods, it looks like you have soy beverage instead of milk on your checks, let’s start with the types and brands you can buy.”

- **Participants returning after shopping** for their WIC foods can provide another opportunity for following up on the shopping experience.
  - For example: “Last month we gave you checks and today I’m checking in with you to see if you have any questions about shopping or the types of foods you can buy on WIC? How did finding whole grains go for you?” “Were you able to find cereals and juices you liked?”
# The Top 5 Most Difficult Foods To Choose Correctly

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>English-speaking participants</th>
<th>Spanish-speaking participants</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Whole Grain Choices</td>
<td>Breakfast cereal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Breakfast Cereal</td>
<td>Cheese</td>
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<td>Juice for Children</td>
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<td>Juice for Women</td>
<td>Fresh Fruits and Vegetables</td>
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<td>Juice for Women</td>
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Successful Ways to Talk About Foods and Checks

1. Encourage participants to use their Smart Phones
2. Engage participants with the Shopping Guide
3. Use the new WIC Grocery Lists with the Shopping Guide to help participants make a plan for shopping
4. Review the 10 Most Important Things staff tool to assure consistent check education
5. Share the 10 Key Points PowerPoint slide show
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Engage with participants to use their Smart Phones
✓ Show participants the back of the Shopping Guide with the web address or
✓ Have participants Google: **WA WIC Foods** or the specific food, for example: **WA WIC BABY FOODS**.
✓ Have participants bookmark or save this address in their phone while in the clinic.
Engage participants with the Shopping Guide
Show the Table of Contents in the Shopping Guide.

Ask participants to interact by finding the pages and letting them know foods are listed alphabetically in the English guide.
Use the Grocery List along with the Shopping Guide
1. Always use the Grocery List along with the Shopping Guide!

2. Grocery Lists are available for:
   - Pregnant & Breastfeeding Women
   - Postpartum & Partially Breastfeeding Women
   - Exclusively Breastfeeding Women
   - Children
   - Infants

Grocery Lists can be ordered from the [Fulfillment Center](#).
4 Review The 10 Most Important Things - A staff tool
The 10 Most Important Things You NEED to Know When Shopping for WIC Foods

1. Staff tool
2. Not a participant handout
3. Checklist for consistent messages
4. Is an optional tool for clinics

You shop:
- Use a current WIC Shopping Guide with you. Use the paper one provided to you at the clinic on your smart phone. Use Google to search for WA WIC Foods. The Shopping Guide is how to find all allowed WIC foods and what foods are not allowed.
- Your WIC checks and ID to the store. Only use a WIC check that has your name printed be sure to show your ID before you use your WIC checks. Your signed Appointment folder can be used for ID.
- If someone is shopping for you, they'll need to have their name printed on the check and they'll need to show their ID.
- WIC checks only on or between the First Day to Use and the Last Day to Use.

You shop:
- Use the foods on your checks and keep WIC foods separate from other items. The cashier will ring up the items on each check individually and in the order listed on the check. WIC has specific foods and stores aren't allowed to make substitutions. Select only the foods printed on your checks.
- You may have shelf tags that can help you identify WIC foods. Unfortunately, not all stores have tags, and sometimes things are mislabeled or moved, so ask if you're uncertain or check your shopping Guide.
- Some stores are not required to carry all the foods WIC offers. Some foods are brand specific so that the store doesn't carry, ask them if they'll order it for you.

What:
- Cashier know you're using a WIC check or checks before they begin ringing up your items.
- Items separated in the order they are on the check and by check.
- Your fruit and vegetable check you:
- Use more than one fruit and vegetable check together.
- You can use cash or Snap-benefits to pay extra if your produce costs more than the amount on the check. You can't get money back if your produce costs less.
- Before signing the WIC check until all the items on the check have been rung up. The cashier will enter the purchase price of the foods on the check. Verify this is the price you see on the check before signing.
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Share The 10 Most Important Things - PowerPoint Slide Show
The 10 Things You’ll Want to Know Before Shopping for WIC Foods

PowerPoint Slide Show
1. Shares consistent messages for shopping with WIC checks
2. Can be used as a check education tool at the desk to share a visual of how to shop
3. Can be used in the clinic on a loop while participants are waiting
4. Can be used in group check education discussions
5. Is an optional tool for clinics
Summary of Information

1. On the 2015 Washington WIC participant Experience Survey when asked “What could be better about WIC?” 27% of participants said: *Shopping for WIC foods.*

2. Clinic staff already share information in a variety of ways to help participants be successful in shopping for WIC foods and this is an area where we’ve not had a focus in a long time.

3. Tools for interaction are presented here to bring focus to this important area.

4. Participants that are confident and knowledgeable about WIC shopping have a better shopping experience, are better able to get all the benefits from their WIC foods.

5. Change comes when we all work together on participant centered, relevant, and appropriate check and foods education. How to do this is up to you!
Next Steps

Consider these questions as you think about foods and check education:

• How do you feel about foods and check education in your clinic?

• What do you think you might do differently since reviewing these techniques and tools?

• What are three things you can do today to improve foods and checks education so the shopping experience is a positive one for your participants?
Next Steps

Optional activities:

• Create a list of standards your clinic agrees to when discussing foods and checks with participants.
  
  • For example: *All participants at a check pick-up appointment will be asked about how the shopping experience went and if they have questions particularly about those foods that are harder to shop for like, whole grains.*

• In your staff area, use flip-chart paper and markers to create a colorful display of foods and checks education ideas for excellence. Write your own commitment for offering shopping education.

• Use index cards to write what you do that’s meaningful to participants when talking about checks and foods. Post them on your staff bulletin board or in the break room for others to see your great ideas.
Resources

WIC foods web page
http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC/WICFoods

Make a complaint to the State WIC Program
http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC/MakeaComplaint

Attend a Vendor Training – WIC 2018 Interactive Vendor Training

Read Vendor e-Bulletins
https://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/WIC/WICVendors/eWIC

Order WIC Grocery Lists from the Fulfillment Center

Contact: Heidi at heidi.feston@doh.wa.gov
Thank-you for all you do to help WIC families shop for and buy WIC foods!
Questions? Contact us:

Email: WAWICtraining@doh.wa.gov

Phone: 1-800-841-1410
(Ask for the Communications and Training Team)

Visit our website: www.doh.wa.gov/wicstaff

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For persons with disabilities, this document is available on request in other formats.
To submit a request, please call 1-800-525-0127 (TDD/TTY call 711)