

Important California WIC Changes Benefit Patients

Beginning October 1, 2009, the WIC food packages, and medical documentation requirements will change in California. New WIC foods will support both the American Academy of Pediatrics feeding guidelines and Dietary Guidelines for Americans. Changes include a greater variety of foods, more incentives for exclusively breastfeeding women, and supervision by clinicians for participants with medical conditions. This will allow WIC to offer our patients the full selection of the new WIC foods.

New WIC Food Packages and Breastfeeding Incentive

Here's what you should know about the new WIC food benefits:

- For the first time, fruits and vegetables are available to all WIC participants.
- Incentives for breastfeeding include reducing the formula allowance for partially breastfed infants, and expanding the amount of food for nursing mothers.
- Infants 6 to 11 months old will receive less formula and more baby food items.
- Infants will no longer receive juice.
- Allowances for milk, eggs and juice have been reduced.
- Soy-based beverages and tofu can be substituted for milk and cheese.

Documentation Requirements

Due to the greater number and variety of WIC foods, you must now use WIC's revised WIC Referral Form to document both the type and amounts of WIC foods to issue to infants and children with special needs. Also, a qualifying condition will be required for children to receive soy milk or tofu from WIC.

These new changes will help us deliver better care to our WIC patients and hold down overall health care costs. To view these medical documentation requirements, go to <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/regspublished/foodpackages-interimrule.htm>.

Information about the new WIC food packages and the WIC Healthy Habits campaign can be found at www.cdph.ca.gov/programs/wicworks/pages/default.aspx. (Click on Health Professionals to find the new WIC Referral Form.)

For more information about the new WIC benefits, please email MD-WIC@cdph.ca.gov or contact your local WIC dietitian at www.wicworks.ca.gov (go to Health Professionals, click on MD-WIC Network).