

# Referring to WIC in the 1st Trimester

Up-to-date information on the Connecticut WIC Program for the healthcare professional.



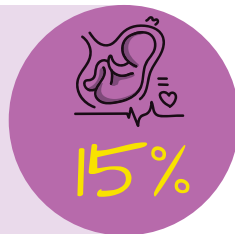
## What is WIC?

WIC, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for **W**omen, **I**nfants and **C**hildren, is a federally-funded discretionary nutrition assistance program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). In Connecticut, WIC is administered by the Department of Public Health and delivers services to over 50,000 individuals throughout the state.

## Why WIC Works? WIC Participation:

- Improves pregnancy outcomes (fewer preterm births, LBW deliveries and infant deaths).
- Reduces hospitalization and Medicaid costs.
- Helps ensure a child's developmental readiness to enter kindergarten.
- Increases food security for low-income families.
- Contributes food dollars to local economies.
- Increases local availability and access to fruits, vegetables, and other healthy foods of benefit to all Connecticut residents.

The amount of participants that enroll in WIC in the 1st trimester. Connecticut WIC has a target of 40%. Help improve birth outcomes and refer to WIC early.



## What Does WIC Provide?

- Nutrition counseling and education.
- Breast/Chestfeeding promotion and support.
- Nutritious supplemental foods.
- Health and Social Service referrals.

## WIC Needs Healthcare Providers!

WIC Nutrition Professionals rely on information collected from healthcare providers to complete a WIC nutrition assessment.

- A patient's height, pre-pregnancy, and current weight.
- Hemoglobin and/or Hematocrit.
- Documentation of any acute or chronic medical conditions and/or medications.
- Any special dietary needs or restrictions.

## Who is Eligible?

Someone who...

### Is in one of the following categories:

- Pregnant women (from confirmation of conception through pregnancy).
- Breastfeeding women (up to infant's 1st birthday).
- Non-breastfeeding postpartum women (up to 6 months postpartum).
- Infants (until their 1st birthday).
- Children (until they reach 5 years old).

### Meets income guidelines:

- Participates in Husky Health (Husky A, C, or D), SNAP, and/or TFA.
- Qualifies based on household income.
- Families with private insurance may qualify.
- Many working families qualify and participate in WIC. Refer working families too.

### Has a nutrition risk:

- Medical (Anthropometrics, Biochemical, and Clinical).
- Nutrition based.
- Environmental (homelessness, food security).

### Lives in Connecticut

WIC does not require proof of citizenship or alien status.



The amount of valuable WIC services a participant will receive when they enroll in their 1st trimester. Benefits include healthy foods, nutrition counseling, and breast/chestfeeding support.

## What WIC Provides

### Breast/Chestfeeding Promotion, and Support

- Start breastfeeding discussions early.
- Promote breastfeeding as the optimal feeding choice.
- Support participant to meet their breast/chestfeeding goals.
- Educate participants on their rights and how to protect their milk supply.

WIC's breastfeeding services include Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC), Peer Counselors, facilitated group education with other participants, assistance with obtaining a breast pump, and referrals to community based lactation support.

### Referrals to Health and Other Social Services

WIC provides referrals for medical and dental care, health insurance, child care, SNAP, housing, fuel assistance, and a lot more.

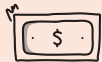
### Nutrition Assessment, Counseling, and Education

All WIC participants receive a complete nutrition assessment which consists of:

- Support to achieve healthy weight gain.
- Evaluating nutritional inadequacies and medical condition.
- Addressing food security.
- A WIC Nutritionist partners with participant to ensure they have a healthy full term delivery and a successful infant feeding experience.

### Nutritious Foods

WIC nutrition professionals partner with participants to select what WIC foods best meet their needs. Based on research from IOM, WIC offers healthier options including low fat dairy, fresh fruits and vegetables, and whole grains.



For every dollar spent on WIC, there is a savings of \$3.50 in healthcare costs.

## How You Can Help

### Breast/Chestfeeding Promotion, and Support

- Initiate early discussions on infant feeding choices.
- Promote breast/chestfeeding as the optimal feeding method.
- Referrals to hospital/community based breast/chestfeeding classes, and WIC services.
- Assist patient with accessing prescription for appropriate Husky Health breast pump (i.e. hospital grade or personal use pump) based on the dyad's needs.
- Consider a breastfeeding training for you and your staff.
- Contact WIC for further collaborations.

### Referrals to WIC

- Mention WIC at prenatal visits.
- Display WIC posters.
- Give new patients WIC informational brochures.
- Encourage patients to start the enrollment process by visiting [ct.gov/apply4WIC](https://ct.gov/apply4WIC).

### Nutrition Assessment, Counseling, and Education

- Refer to WIC early and often.
- Encourage all patients to consider applying for WIC.
- Complete a WIC Certification/Medical Referral form for patients.

Patients can start on WIC before their first prenatal visit. When pregnancy is confirmed, encourage your staff to refer your patients to the WIC program for early enrollment. The earlier a patient starts on WIC the better health outcomes.

### Nutritious Foods

Stay current with updates to WIC eligible foods. Recent changes include increased fruit and vegetable benefits.

Visit <https://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/wic-food-packages> for information on proposed changes to WIC food packages.