

WIC Fast Facts – Help Your Patients Stick With WIC Until Age 5

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

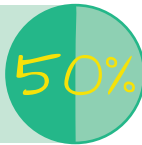


Did you know?



WIC families save up to **\$70 monthly** on groceries.

Children between the ages of 1 and 5 make up **over 50%** of all WIC participants.



WIC Needs Health Care Providers!

WIC Nutrition Professionals rely on information collected from health care providers to complete a nutrition assessment:

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

WIC Bloodwork Facts

Among the 10 local WIC agencies in Connecticut, the rate of anemia ranges from 4.9%-12.6%. These rates include children enrolled in the CT WIC program ages 2-5 years. (September 2022) WIC has a target of $\leq 7.5\%$.

Help WIC fight the battle on childhood anemia and lead exposure:

- Test hemoglobin and/or hematocrit at well child visits and follow-up when a WIC child participant has a low Hgb/Hct per MMWR and WIC guidelines!
- Conduct annual lead tests on all children 9 months to 35 months of age.



Who is Eligible?

Someone who...



Is in one of the following categories:

- Children (until they reach 5 years old).
- Infants (until their 1st birthday).
- Women (Pregnant, breastfeeding, post-partum).



Meets income guidelines:

- Participates in HUSKY Health (Husky A, C & D), SNAP and/or TFA.
- Qualifies based on household income.
- Families with private insurance may qualify. 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.

Why WIC Works?

- Reduces hospitalizations and Medicaid costs.
- Likely to receive preventative medical care.
- Helps ensure a child's developmental readiness to enter kindergarten.
- Increase 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.



What WIC Provides

Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Education

WIC Nutrition Professionals address the Dietary Guidelines for Americans with a focus on whole grains, low fat milk, fruits and vegetables and child feedings using various teaching tools, activities and interventions.

www.dietaryguidelines.gov/

- Evaluates nutritional inadequacies and medical conditions.
- Uses Motivational Interviewing to achieve individual and/or family goals.
- Supports family's to achieve and maintain a healthy weight.
- Addresses food security.
- Provides follow-up on any referrals made outside of WIC.

WIC Makes Referrals

WIC staff provides referrals for medical, mental health, and dental care, health insurance, child care, SNAP, housing, fuel assistance, substance use and tobacco/nicotine cessation, and a lot more.

Food Package Changes

A WIC Nutrition Professional works with a participant to select the WIC foods that best fit their needs. Food allergies, medical conditions and/or participant preference are taken into consideration when making food selections.

Responding to the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) review of the WIC Food Packages, the WIC Program now offers more options of low fat dairy, whole grains, fresh fruits and vegetables and good sources of protein. These options include, but are not limited to yogurt, whole wheat pasta, dried or canned beans, low-fat or fat-free milk for all children aged 2-5 and whole milk for children age 12-24 months.

Breast/Chestfeeding Promotion and Support

WIC Nutrition Professionals and support staff promote breast/chestfeeding as the optimal feeding choice, support participants on meeting their goals especially when extended breast/chestfeeding is desired and offer referrals to WIC Peer Counselors, hospital/community based breastfeeding classes and assistance with obtaining breastfeeding aids.

How You Can Help

Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Education

- Encourage all families to consider applying for WIC.
- Complete a WIC Certification/Medical Referral form for Infants/Children.
- Consider reaching out to WIC to discuss concerns with a change in growth such as a BMI > 85%.

Refer to WIC Early and Often

- Encourage all parents of eligible children to Stick With WIC until age 5.
- Display WIC posters.
- Display and provide patients' WIC informational brochures.
- Encourage patients to start the enrollment process by visiting ct.gov/apply4WIC.

WIC benefits redeemed monthly put roughly **\$2.5 million** into the local CT economy.

\$2.5 Million

Food Package Changes

Stay current with updates to WIC eligible foods by contacting the local WIC Program or visiting the Connecticut WIC Program/Department of Public Health webpage.

www.ct.gov/dph/wic



Connecticut WIC has seen a **12% increase** in fruits and vegetable redemptions from June 2021–May 2023 with the increased cash value benefit in 2021. **Beyond the economic benefits see the impact it has had on one CT family:** "Absolutely love this benefit. This is our most used benefit and benefits my child greatly. She has eaten so many fruits and vegetables since we've been offered this benefit. She has been able to try new fruits and vegetables as well."

Breast/Chestfeeding Promotion and Support

- Promote breast/chestfeeding as the optimal feeding choice.
- Consider breast/chestfeeding training for you and your staff.
- Contact WIC for further collaborations.