

WIC Fast Facts - WIC's Efforts in Preventing Childhood Obesity

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



Did you know?

✓ WIC Participants will receive individual nutrition messages and support to make healthy choices including a diet adequate in fruits and vegetables, reducing sugar sweetened beverages and meeting daily physical activity suggestions.

✓ WIC Participants have increased the consumption of whole grains, fruits, vegetables and low fat dairy products as a result of the WIC food package changes.

✓ The longer a child is on WIC, the more health information they will receive.

✓ "Children are five times more likely to be obese as an adult if they are overweight or obese between the ages of three and five years, so prevention needs to start at birth – and even before."
National WIC Association, March 2015

Why WIC Works

- Reduces hospitalizations and Medicaid costs.
- Likely to receive preventative medical care.
- 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.

We want kids to eat healthy, be active and ready to learn.



Nationally, the obesity rates for children ages 2–4 years have decreased from **15.9%** in 2010 to **14.4%** in 2020.

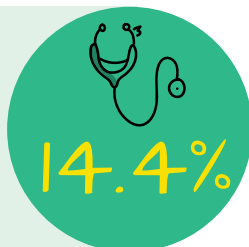
<https://www.cdc.gov/obesity/data/obesity-among-WIC-enrolled-young-children.html>

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 data reports in Connecticut show an overweight rate of **14.4%** and an obesity rate of **16.7%** for children between the ages of 2–4 years. (January 2023)



What WIC Provides

A Focus on Breastfeeding

- WIC supports the AAP's Policy Statement on Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk, which states, "breastfeeding and human milk are the normative standards for infant feeding and nutrition."
- Promote breast/chestfeeding as the optimal feeding choice for infants and as an early childhood overweight and obesity prevention strategy.
- Use WHO Growth Standards to assess infants' growth from 0-24 months of age.
- Discuss growth patterns of breast/chestfed infants at various stages of development.

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

Individualized, Participant-Centered Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Education

At a WIC certification visit, the WIC Nutrition Professional will,

- Conduct a complete WIC nutrition assessment for all infant and child participants.
- Recommend delayed complimentary feeding until 6 months of age.

- Support AAP Guidelines of no more than 4 oz. of juice per day. Juice is not provided in WIC's infant food package.
- For children aged 2-5 years, assess growth patterns using CDC Growth Charts. Discuss healthy weight and assess parent's perception of growth. A WIC Nutrition Professional will work individually with the child's parent or caretaker to support healthy growth.
- Use Motivational Interviewing (MI) to set realistic, achievable, participant selected health goals.
- Develop a plan and provide individual follow-up to track positive behavior change.

Referrals to Health and other Social Services

Refer back to the health care provider to ensure consistent messages about growth, development and weight. Provide targeted referrals for dental care, health insurance, SNAP, emergency food resources, local park and recreation departments, free or low cost physical activity programs.

Nutritious Foods

A WIC Nutrition Professional works with a participant to select the WIC foods that best fit their needs. Responding to the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) review of the WIC Food Packages, the WIC Program offers healthier options including low fat dairy, fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains.

How You Can Help

A Focus on Breastfeeding

- Initiate early discussions on infant feeding choices.
- Review Breastfeeding in Underserved Women: Increasing Initiation and Continuation of Breastfeeding (ACOG August 2013, Number 570).
- Support the recommendations in the 2022 AAP Policy Statement on Breastfeeding and Use of Human Milk with your patients.
- Provide referrals to hospital/community based breastfeeding classes and WIC services.
- Consider a breastfeeding training for you and your staff.
- Contact WIC for further collaborations.

Nutrition Assessment, Counseling and Education

- Use and discuss WHO growth standards (0-24 months of age) with patients as appropriate.
- Consider reaching out to the local WIC program to partner on consistent overweight and obesity prevention messages.
- Contact WIC if a patient's growth or BMI is above the 85th percentile on the CDC Growth Chart.
- Consider Motivational Interviewing training for you or your staff.

Referrals to WIC

- Encourage all parents to consider applying for WIC and sticking with WIC until 5 years of age, if eligible.
- Complete a WIC Certification/Medical Referral form for Infants/Children.
- If your patient is diagnosed with overweight or obesity, contact WIC or provide details of your plan so the WIC Nutritionist can help to track compliance.
- Mention WIC at preventative and sick visits.
- Display WIC posters.
- Give new patients WIC informational brochures.
- Encourage parents to start the enrollment process by visiting ct.gov/apply4WIC.

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.



To apply for WIC visit ct.gov/apply4WIC, or to find out more visit ct.gov/dph/wic or call **1-800-741-2142**.

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