



## 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 meet 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

### 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



### 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

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



Nationally, the obesity rates for children ages 2-5 years have decreased from **13.9%** in 2003-2004 to **8.4%** in 2011-2012



## What WIC Provides

### **A Focus on Breastfeeding**

- Support the AAP's Policy Statement on Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk, "infant feeding should not be considered as a lifestyle choice but a basic health issue."
- Promote breastfeeding 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 breastfed infants at various stages of development.

WIC's breastfeeding services include Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC), facilitated group education with other women, 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 now offers healthier options including low fat dairy, fresh fruits and vegetables and whole grains.



To find out more call **1-800-741-2142**, visit [ct.gov/dph/wic](http://ct.gov/dph/wic), or call the WIC clinic in your area.

## 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 AAP's Policy Statement on Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk, "infant feeding should not be considered as a lifestyle choice but a basic health issue."
- 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.

### **Nutritious Foods**

Stay current with updates to WIC eligible foods. Recent changes include:

- Yogurt
- Whole wheat pasta
- Low-fat or Fat-free milk for all children aged 2-5 and whole milk for children age 12-24 months

