



4 FOOD PACKAGE/FI ISSUANCE

Effective: 3/1/98

4.2 WIC Food List/Food Packages Overview

Revised: 8/1/09

POLICY: Projects are responsible for implementation of revised WIC Approved Food Lists, including training vendors (except in Milwaukee County) and informing participants.

BACKGROUND:

Supplemental Foods

The WIC Program provide supplemental foods designed to address the nutritional needs of low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, non-breastfeeding postpartum women, and infants and children up to five years of age who are at nutritional risk. According to USDA, “Supplemental foods means those foods containing nutrients determined to be beneficial for program participants and foods that promote the health of the population served by the WIC program authorized by federal regulations, as indicated by relevant science, public health concerns, and cultural eating patterns.” The Federal WIC Regulations specify the types and maximum quantities of foods that are provided to the various categories of WIC participants. States select the specific foods and design the system by which they will be provided. See *WIC Food Authorization Criteria* (Attachment to this policy)

Wisconsin WIC Food List

The State WIC Office typically revises the WIC Approved Food list, in conjunction with the vendor authorization process, every three years with an effective date of November 1st. Due to the required implementation of the Interim Food Rule, there is a 2009-10 Food List effective on August 3, 2009 that will be effective through October 31, 2010. The list is developed with input from appropriate stakeholders (e.g., participants, Project staff, vendor representatives, State staff) using established criteria (see *WIC Food Authorization Criteria* (attachment to this policy), with subsequent approval by USDA. To help assure consistency in philosophy from year to year, the goal is: "To establish criteria to promote healthy, lifelong eating habits, the criteria are to be balanced among the following: nutritional content, cost, availability, participant needs, and preferences.”

Food Packages

Food packages, consisting of food instruments (FIs) that specify the approved foods and quantities, are generated by ROSIE. “Model” food packages in ROSIE provide a combination of food instruments (FIs) that specify the WIC approved food(s) and allowable quantities. Model food packages are organized by general participant category, status and/or age, and circumstance (e.g., limited storage), and can be further tailored. A CPA prescribes the food package to be issued to each participant, taking into consideration the participant’s nutritional needs. The CPA and/or Project-designated



support staff tailors the quantities based on the assigned pick-up days, e.g., late or catch-up issuance. The participant uses the FIs at an authorized vendor (store or pharmacy).

WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program

The WIC Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) provides fresh, nutritious, unprepared Wisconsin grown fruits, vegetables, and herbs to eligible WIC families. FMNP FIs are issued in addition to WIC FIs. The FMNP food package is issued one per family (not each participant) per season.

PROCEDURE:

A. FOOD LIST REVISION AND IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS. The food list is reviewed and revised [typically] every three years in conjunction with the Vendor Reauthorization Process.

1. The State WIC Program collects nutrient, price, availability, and participant preference information on WIC eligible foods (i.e., those that meet the Federal WIC Regulations); convenes a workgroup to make recommendations for the Food List; develops the List; obtains USDA approval; develops and/or revises materials for vendors and participants; and develops and implements the process for converting from the old Food List.
2. The State WIC Office mails quantities of new/revised materials (WIC Approved Foods guides; "WIC, You, and the Grocery Store, Too" DVDs to Projects, and other materials as needed. Revised Food List materials are also sent to vendors.
3. The State WIC Office provides training for Project Directors and Vendors Contacts.
4. Projects are required to conduct vendor trainings (except for Milwaukee county vendors who are trained by the State WIC Office staff). Guidance is issued from the State WIC Office.
5. Projects are required to distribute materials and train participants as requested by the State WIC Office.

B. FOOD LIST/FOOD PACKAGE MATERIALS FOR PARTICIPANTS

1. *WIC Approved Foods* is a full color pictorial guide that illustrates and lists all of the approved foods except for formulas and liquid nutrition products. This guide must be given to all participants at the initial certification, when the food list



changes, and when requested by the participant, e.g. if the participant lost the guide. It is produced in English, Spanish, and Hmong.

2. *"WIC, You, and the Grocery Store, Too"* DVD should be used for training participants and proxies to select only approved foods and how to spend the food instruments at the store. It is produced in English, Spanish, and Hmong. If the DVD is not shown, the WIC staff must explain the content of the DVD.
3. A list of WIC-approved vendors in the service area must be given to participants/proxies at the initial certification.

C. CHANGES TO THE LIST MID-CYCLE

Foods are not added to the list mid-cycle, even if they meet the approval criteria. Products are removed from the list mid-cycle if a reformulation makes them ineligible, if the name changes, or if the label changes so significantly that it is confusing for participants' selection.

1. When the State WIC Office provides information or clarification on foods, generally through a monthly Update, inform participants (e.g., via a newsletter, posters, etc.).
2. If a store carries a new product (or one where it is unclear whether or not it is approved), it is recommended that product information (e.g., name, website, label, ingredient list), be sent to the State WIC Office for clarification or for consideration during the next selection cycle.
3. Do not approve/issue a food or brand of a food for purchase by participants that has not been authorized by the State WIC Office.

Attachment:
WIC Food Authorization Criteria