

From the Tennessee AAP Newsletter

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THE WIC PROGRAM IS CHANGING!! Actually, the WIC foods are changing to include more variety, to decrease saturated fat, and to increase fruits, vegetables and whole grains. This represents the most substantive change to the program since its inception in 1974. This revision will align the WIC supplemental foods offered to participants with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans and the American Academy of Pediatrics' infant feeding guidance.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Food and Nutrition Service charged the Institute of Medicine's Review Committee of the Food and Nutrition Board with a review of the WIC Food Packages based on the nutritional needs of the population being served by WIC, assessing the supplemental nutrition needs of the WIC population, and proposed specific changes for the food packages. Additionally, the committee was charged with consideration of cultural diversity, of administrative burden, of national distribution of foods and vendors, and of cost neutrality. Their report, *WIC Food Packages—Time for a Change*, recommends adoption of the plan to increase flexibility, variety, and participant choices as integral to meeting the criteria used by the committee.

In December 2007, USDA's Food and Nutrition Service released the Revisions in the WIC Food Packages Rule for implementation on October 1, 2009. The revised food packages better reflect current nutrition science and dietary recommendations for women, infants and children. Since a major goal of the WIC Program is to improve the nutritional status of infants, WIC mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their infants. Mothers who exclusively breastfeed their infants receive an enhanced food package. The addition of whole grain products, fruits, vegetables, and soy-based products and adjusting the amount of formula for formula-fed infants based on their age are just a few of the changes.

In the AAP News, Vol. 29, #12, Dr. Frank Greer, Nutrition Committee Chair, provided a summary of the information that Healthcare Providers (HCPs) should know. This summary included the approval of therapeutic formulas and medical foods with a "medical prescription" as well as one for soy beverage and tofu for children. All complimentary foods for infants and conventional foods for women and children will also be available for participants with the HCP approval.

To aid the HCP, Tennessee WIC will be providing electronic fillable forms for the required medical documentation. The forms can also be downloaded from the Tennessee WIC website: <http://health.state.tn.us/wic/> under the "Policies" tab. Additional information about the food package changes is available at [www.fns.usda.gov/wic](http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic).