



WIC Basics for Healthcare Providers

What is WIC?

WIC, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children, is a federally funded public health nutrition program administered by the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), Food and Nutrition Service (FNS). In New Hampshire, WIC is administered by the Department of Health and Human Services' Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Section and delivers nutrition services to participants through four local agencies and more than 50 satellite clinics located throughout the state.

In New Hampshire, the WIC Program serves approximately 15,000 participants per month. We strives to provide quality nutrition services to more than 9,000 families monthly. Federal regulations require all applicants and participants to receive a nutrition assessment to determine their WIC eligibility. WIC benefits include: nutrition and breastfeeding counseling and education, supplemental nutritious foods, and referrals to health and social services.



WIC Needs Healthcare Providers

Healthcare providers play an important role in the WIC certification process. WIC nutritionists use information collected from health care providers to complete the nutrition assessment. The information may be recorded on the *NH Early Childhood Health Assessment Record* (<http://www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/nhp/wic/documents/healthform.pdf>) or on the health care provider's letterhead. Required data for a WIC certification includes: the participant's current weight and height (within 60 days of the WIC appointment), bloodwork (hematocrit or hemoglobin), documentation of any acute or chronic medical conditions, medications, and special dietary needs or restrictions.

NH WIC Eligibility Requirements

Categorical Eligibility

- ♦ Pregnant women through pregnancy
- ♦ Breastfeeding women up to one year
- ♦ Non-breastfeeding postpartum women for 6 months
- ♦ Infants up to their 1st birthday
- ♦ Children up to their 5th birthday

Income Eligibility

- ♦ Income at or below 185% of the Federal poverty guidelines. Income guidelines are based on family size; a pregnant woman is counted as one + the number of fetuses she is carrying. Guidelines increase slightly in April each year.

Nutritional Risk Eligibility

- ♦ WIC uses two broad categories of risk: medically based, such as low birth weight, and diet based, such as inappropriate nutrition and feeding behaviors.

Residency Eligibility

- ♦ Participants must live in New Hampshire, however WIC does not require proof of citizenship or alien status.

What WIC Provides

Breastfeeding Support

The New Hampshire WIC Program follows the American Academy of Pediatrics' Statement, *Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk*. WIC encourages pregnant mothers to breastfeed their infants unless medically contraindicated. Evidence-based information, and both prenatal and postpartum lactation support is available to WIC participants. Breastfeeding women receive an enhanced food package, and assistance with obtaining a breast pump. The New Hampshire WIC Program has a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program, offering mother-to-mother support for breastfeeding. Each local agency has Certified Lactation Counselors (CLC) available to provide individual support for pregnant and breastfeeding mothers. The initiation rate for breastfeeding in the NH WIC Program is 73% (2013) and showing a steady increase as more mothers choose to breastfeed.



Check our website regularly for updated information at:

www.dhhs.nh.gov/dphs/nhp/wic

If you have questions, would like to arrange for an in-service at your office, would like to be added to our mailing list, or need outreach materials, send an email to:

WIC@dhhs.nh.gov

Or call 1-800-942-4321



Nutrition Counseling and Education

The WIC nutritionist provides individualized counseling to families based on a complete nutrition assessment to encourage development of healthy behaviors based on positive health outcomes. Education and counseling often focus on prenatal nutrition, breastfeeding, and infant, toddler and preschool feeding issues. The promotion of healthy eating habits and regular physical activity are encouraged.

Referrals to Health and Social Services

WIC provides referrals for families to a variety of services such as SNAP/Food Stamp Program, Head Start, TANF, Medicaid, medical and dental services, substance abuse programs, local food pantries and many more. WIC regularly educates families on the importance of dental health, immunizations, lead poisoning prevention, and smoking cessation.

Nutritious Foods

The WIC nutritionist determines the WIC food package based on a nutrition assessment and the family's preference. Participants receive vouchers to redeem at 200 authorized NH WIC stores. Food packages vary according to the participant's category and age. The WIC foods were selected to provide nutrients found to be lacking in WIC's target population and are critical during periods of growth and development. Most food packages contain milk, cheese, eggs, juice, cereal, whole grain bread, peanut butter and/or beans and a Cash Value Voucher for the purchase of fruits and vegetables. Other options include wheat or corn tortillas, whole wheat pasta, oatmeal, brown rice, soymilk, tofu, yogurt, tuna, or salmon. Infants 6 months and older are provided with infant cereal, and jarred infant fruits and vegetables. Exclusively breastfed infants also receive jarred infant meats. Healthy formula fed infants are provided with contract formulas of Mead Johnson Enfamil Premium *Infant*, Enfamil *Newborn*, Enfamil *ProSobee*, and Enfamil *Gentlease*.