

The WIC Food Packages: From Then to Now

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, or WIC, administers supplemental foods that provide specific nutrients, breastfeeding support, nutrition education, and health and social service referrals to approximately 8 million people in the United States.

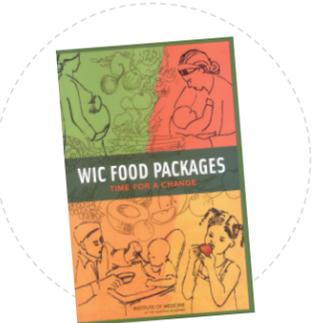
Beginning operations in 1974 and enacted into legislation in 1975, the program's mission has remained constant: to safeguard the health of low-income women, infants, and children up to age 5 who are at nutritional risk by providing food, nutrition counseling, and access to health services. At the same time, the goals of the program have evolved over the past 40 years to promote breastfeeding; provide a wider variety of foods, including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; and accommodate cultural eating patterns of program participants. What follows is a timeline outlining some of the major changes to the food packages since its inception.



1974

WIC PROGRAM BEGINS AND THE FIRST FOOD PACKAGES ARE ESTABLISHED

The WIC program was the first federal nutrition assistance program focusing on needs during development and with a required nutrition education component.



2006

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE* PROPOSES REVISIONS

The major revisions to the food packages laid out in the IOM report "WIC Food Packages: Time for a Change" were the first significant revisions proposed since the program's inception.



2009

2009 REVISED FOOD PACKAGES ARE IMPLEMENTED, BASED ON THE INTERIM RULE

The goal of the 2009 revised food packages was to improve alignment with dietary guidance and cultural suitability by reducing some foods, adding many more options for food categories, and including a cash value voucher (CVV) for purchase of vegetables and fruits.



2015

STATES MAY AUTHORIZE YOGURT AS A MILK SUBSTITUTION AND WHITE POTATOES ARE ALLOWED

In accordance with the final regulation, one quart of milk may be substituted with 1 quart of yogurt. States are required to include white potatoes to be eligible for purchase with the cash value voucher.



1992

FOOD PACKAGE VII IS CREATED TO ENCOURAGE BREASTFEEDING

The addition of food package VII for fully breastfeeding women included carrots and fish and increased amounts of other foods. This was the most substantive change made to the food packages between 1975 and issuance of the interim rule in 2007.



2007

THE USDA'S FOOD AND NUTRITION SERVICE PUBLISHES THE INTERIM RULE, OUTLINING THE NEW WIC FOOD PACKAGES

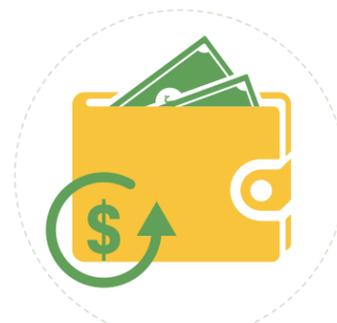
The revised food packages laid out in the Interim Rule, which were implemented in 2009, resulted in dramatic changes to the foods and nutrients provided by the food packages.



2014

THE FOOD PACKAGES ARE BETTER ALIGNED WITH THE 2010 DIETARY GUIDELINES FOR AMERICANS

The CVV for children is increased from \$6 to \$8, and only skim and low-fat milks are permitted for children 2 years of age and older, as well as women.



2017

THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES OF SCIENCES, ENGINEERING, AND MEDICINE PROPOSE A NEW SET OF REVISIONS TO FOOD PACKAGES

Built on the 2009 changes, the new recommendations improve the balance among the food groups within the packages and further increase choice and flexibility as well as culturally suitable options (to promote redemption and consumption).

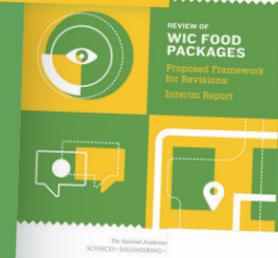
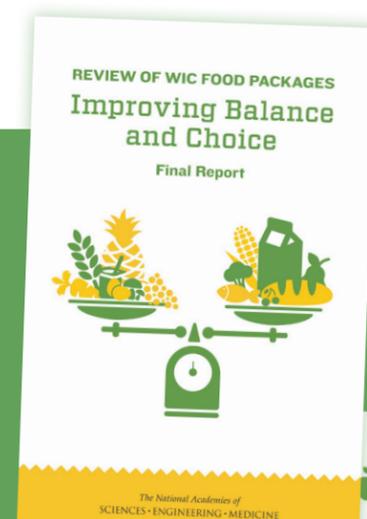
The new recommendations better align with the current Dietary Guidelines for Americans in:

- Increasing vegetables and whole fruit
- Increasing whole grains
- Providing fish to nearly all
- Reducing sodium and saturated fat

The new recommendations increase flexibility and substantially enhance the packages for women who choose to breastfeed.

To read the full report, please visit nationalacademies.org/WICfoodpackages.

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* As of March 2016, the Health and Medicine Division continues the consensus studies and convening activities previously undertaken by the Institute of Medicine (IOM).