

## FACTS ABOUT WIC



### What is WIC?

WIC stands for **W**omen, **I**nfants and **C**hildren. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children was created by Public Law 89-642 in 1966. WIC is a food and nutrition program funded by the United States Department of Agriculture through the Michigan Department of Community Health. Local agencies, such as health departments and non-profit organizations, deliver WIC services and benefits to the public.

WIC helps to correct or prevent malnutrition in low-income pregnant and breastfeeding women, women who recently had a baby, infants and children up to 5 years old who are at health risk due to inadequate nutrition. WIC provides supplemental food, offers professional nutrition education, promotes breastfeeding through the first year of life, and makes referrals based on health screening and assessments of need.

### WIC PROVIDES:

- **SUPPLEMENTAL FOOD.** Nutritious foods are provided to supplement and help improve the diet. Women and children may receive milk, cheese, eggs, juices rich in Vitamin C, cereals rich in iron, and dry peas/beans or peanut butter.

Breastfeeding women may also receive tuna fish and carrots. Non-breastfed and part-time breastfed infants may receive iron-fortified infant formula. All infants receive infant cereal and infant juice after six months of age.

Participants receive coupons which they may redeem for food at any WIC retail stores throughout Michigan which are authorized to accept WIC coupons.

Fresh, locally-grown produce is provided to many WIC participants by most local agencies through Project FRESH, Michigan's Farmers= Market Nutrition Program.

- **NUTRITION EDUCATION.** Nutrition education is offered to all WIC participants or their caregivers. Common topics include nutrition during pregnancy, infant feeding, nutrition during childhood, and wise food shopping. WIC encourages women to breastfeed because of the many health benefits for both baby and mother.
- **REFERRALS.** An added benefit of the WIC Program is screening for other health problems and referrals to other appropriate health and social services. These referrals may be for Medicaid, MI-Child, Healthy Kids, Food Stamps, immunizations, child health screening, family planning, Project FRESH, and more.

### Who is Eligible for WIC?

Those eligible to receive WIC are pregnant and breastfeeding women; women who have recently had a baby; infants from birth to 12 months; and children from 1 to 5 years who are also:

- Residents of the state of Michigan.
- Income eligible (at or below 185% of Federal Poverty Income Guidelines or on Medicaid or food stamps).
- Determined by WIC clinic staff in local agencies to be at nutrition and/or health risk.

## What Are the Nutrition and Health Risks?

Some typical health risks are: low blood iron or anemia, too much or too little weight gain (for pregnant women and children), poor diet, chronic disease, and developmental disabilities.

Other health risks include past problems during pregnancy such as low birth weight or premature delivery.

## What Does WIC Cost?

WIC services are free to applicants and participants.

## Is WIC Effective?

Yes! WIC is a proven effective health care program. Evaluations of WIC show that:

- WIC helps pregnant women see physicians earlier and receive timely prenatal care.
- WIC improves pregnancy outcome by providing or referring to support services necessary for full term pregnancies.
- WIC participation improves the diet of pregnant women and improves the length of pregnancy and infant birth weight.
- WIC participation reduces infant mortality by reducing the incidence of low birth weight infants (under 5 2 pounds). Low birth weight infants are at greater risk for breathing problems, brain injuries, and physical abnormalities.
- WIC significantly reduces anemia among preschool children.
- WIC children are better immunized and more likely to have a regular source of health care.

## How Can I Find Out More About WIC?

- Call your local health department for further information, OR
- Call **1-800-26-BIRTH** (1-800-252-4784) for the phone number of the WIC clinic nearest you.

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