

WIC Food Package Changes: Women, Children, and Foods

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1

Housekeeping

- Microphones and cameras
- Chat
- Q&A
- Breaks
- Break out rooms
- Participation

2

Agenda

- Illinois Food Choices
- Food List Updates
- Working through IL WIC MIS & Substitutions
- Break – 15 min
- Shopping for the new WIC foods
- Activity – Break out Sessions
- Q & A

3

Why Change?

2010: Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 requires a review of the WIC Food Packages every 10 years

2022: Proposed rule published

2024: Final Rule Published

4

Updates



Based on the 2017 NASEM recommendations



Reflect the Dietary Guidelines for Americans 2020-2025



Reflect the FDA/EPA joint Advice About Eating Fish



Public comments helped tailor the final package

5

Fruits and Vegetables (Cash-Value Benefit - CVB)

Fruits and Vegetables (Cash-Value Benefit - CVB)

Participant Category	Previous CVB Amount	Revised CVB Amount (FY 2026)
Children	\$9	\$26
Pregnant and Postpartum Women	\$11	\$48
Fully and Partially Breastfeeding Women	\$11	\$52

6

More Choice

Authorize

Authorize at least 1 other form of fruits and vegetables in addition to fresh

Allow

Allow fresh herbs to be purchased with the CVB

7

Juice

Participant Category	Previous Allowance	Revised Allowance
Children	128 fl oz	64 fl oz
Pregnant and Breastfeeding Women	144 fl oz	64 fl oz
Postpartum Women	96 fl oz	64 fl oz

8

More Choice

Allow

\$3 CVB as a substitute for juice

9

Milk

Participant Category	Previous Allowance	Revised Allowance
Children 12–23 months	16 qt (4 gallons)	16 qt (4 gallons)
Children 2–4 years	16 qt	16 qt (4 gallons)
Pregnant Women	24 qt (6 gallons)	22 qt (5 ½ gallons)
Partially Breastfeeding Women	24 qt	22 qt (5 ½ gallons)
Postpartum Women	24 qt	16 qt (4 gallons)
Fully Breastfeeding Women	24 qt	24 qt (6 gallons)

10

More Choice

Allow

Plant-based alternatives that meet nutrient specifications as milk substitution options – IL offers soy milk as a plant-based alternative

11

Breakfast Cereals

Aspect	Previous Requirement	Revised Requirement
Whole Grain Content	At least 50% whole grain	At least 75% whole grain
Sugar Content	≤ 6 grams per oz	≤ 6 grams Added Sugars per oz

12

Whole Grains

Participant Category	Previous Allowance	Revised Allowance
Children	32 oz	24 oz
Women	16 oz	48 oz

13

More Choice

Previous Options

Brown rice, bulgur, oatmeal, WG barley, soft corn or WW tortillas

Revised Options

Quinoa; wild rice; millet; triticale; amaranth; kamut; sorghum; wheat berries; tortillas made with folic acid-fortified corn masa flour; corn meal (including blue); teff; buckwheat; and whole wheat pita, English muffins, bagels, and naan.

14

Canned Fish

Participant Category	Previous Allowance	Revised Allowance
Children (1-4 years)	Not provided	6 oz
Pregnant and Postpartum Participants	Not provided	10 oz
Partially Breastfeeding Participants	Not provided	15 oz
Fully Breastfeeding Participants	30 oz	20 oz

15

Legumes, Peanut Butter, Eggs



Require both dried and canned beans



Legumes and peanut butter can be substituted for eggs

16

To Summarize

FOOD	CHANGE
CVB	Permanent increase, adjusted annually for inflation, expand eligible items to include fresh herbs.
Canned Fish	Available for all women and children.
Eggs	Beans and peanut butter allowed as substitute for eggs.
Breakfast Cereal	Must contain whole grain as 1 st ingredient and require 75% of all cereals authorized to be whole grain.
Whole Grains	Increase amounts for women and reduce amounts for children. Expanded options.
Dairy	Reduce milk amounts for women and children. Require authorization of lactose-free milk. No longer allow flavored milk. Plant-based milk, yogurt, and cheese alternatives added. Reduce added sugar limit for yogurt and add vitamin D requirement. Add calcium requirement for tofu.
Juice	Reduce amounts for children and women. Allow S3 CVB substitution.
Vendor Stock	Require vendors to stock at least 3 different vegetables.

The Food List - Grains

- Broadbanded option – choose what to buy at the store
- Added whole wheat bagels, whole wheat English muffins, corn masa flour
- New sizes
 - Bread, bulgur, brown rice, oatmeal



The Food List - Broadband



Flexibility in food package issuance that allows participants to choose from a variety of food options within a food category.



Allows for more choices and substitutions at the store

The Food List – Protein Rich Foods

- Beans, Peas, Lentils, Peanut Butter
 - Broadbanded option- choose what to buy at the store
- Tofu
 - Calcium requirement, added texture to the listed brands
- Canned Fish – Chunk Light Tuna, Pink Salmon, Sardines
 - Added Sardines
 - New sizes
 - Flavors allowed for tuna and sardines

21

The Food List – Fruits & Vegetables



ADDED FRESH HERBS

22

The Food List- Juice



Removed 48 oz container or 12 oz frozen



ALL juice now in 64 oz containers

23

The Food List - Dairy



Cow's milk, Lactose-Free, Soy



Kosher, UHT

- Broadbanded option- choose what to buy at the store
- Gallons, half-gallons
- Choose at the clinic
- Must be printed on Family Shopping List to purchase

24

The Food List - Dairy

- Yogurt
 - Whole and Low Fat for 1-year children
 - Low Fat and Nonfat for children over the age of 2 and women
 - Sugar requirement limited the flavored options, plain available for most brands

25

The WIC MIS



Major changes to the Food Prescription screen.



Similar concept across all categories and packages

26

The WIC MIS - Grids

Food Category	Prescription Max (Units)	Food Item Selected	Quantity	Physical Form
Infant Formula (FF)	7.00	Infant Formula Formula	7.00	078
Infant Fruits and veget.	120.00	Jarred Infant Fruits and Vegetables	120.00	02
Infant Cereal	8.00	Infant Cereal	8.00	02

Package Size	Description	Substitution Amount
100	Fruits and Vegetables Cash Value Benefit	0

27

The WIC MIS – User Interface

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Package Size	Description	Substitution Amount
100	Fruits and Vegetables Cash Value Benefit	0

28

The WIC MIS - Broadband

8 OZ
128 OZ
7 CTR

INFANT CEREAL
JARRED INFANT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
SIMILAC ADVANCE 12.4OZ, SIMILAC TOTAL COMFORT 12.6OZ,
SIMILAC SOY ISOMIL 12.4OZ, SIMILAC SENSITIVE 12.5OZ

29

The WIC MIS - Broadband

Use the chart below to guide participants in the options available.

START HERE

These options are available if your infant does not tolerate Simlac Advance

<p>Similac Advance 12.4 oz powder can</p> <p>Milk-based formula Commonly used, well tolerated by most</p>	<p>Similac Total Comfort 12.6 oz powder can</p> <p>Milk-based formula with broken down proteins & reduced lactose</p>	<p>Similac Sensitive 12.5 oz powder can</p> <p>Milk-based formula with little to no lactose</p>	<p>Similac Soy Isomil 12.4 oz powder can</p> <p>Soy-based formula with broken down proteins & no lactose</p>
May help with:		May help with:	
Gas, fussiness		Gas, fussiness, spit up	

30

The WIC MIS – ASSIGNING A PACKAGE

31

The WIC MIS – Group Max Tally

32

The WIC MIS – New Packages

New changes – February 25, 2026

Must assign new packages for participants to receive the changes

Remove/disable any current packages to assign new packages.

37

The WIC MIS – Key Points

- Use the substitution grid
- Use the substitution grid
- Use the substitution grid

38

The Shopping – More Choice

- More Choice at the Store
 - Certain food categories have been expanded to increase participant choice at the point of purchase.
 - Contract powder formula
 - Milk
 - Whole wheat bread and whole grains
 - Beans and peanut butter
 - Canned Fish

39

The Shopping - Size

- Product Size Matters
 - The new regulations allow states to authorize package sizes that increase participant variety and choice
 - Choosing certain package sizes may not use the full benefit and leave quantities remaining.
 - Categories with expanded size offerings:
 - Grains (bread, bulgur, brown rice, corn masa flour, oatmeal)
 - Canned Fish
 - Milk (lactose-free)

40

WIC Shopping Guide

WIC Staff Desktop Resource



GRAINS

- 100% whole wheat bread, buns, bagels, English muffins, pasta, bulgur, brown rice, corn masa flour, tortillas, and oatmeal
- Issued in units of ounces (oz)
- Buy a combination of allowed whole wheat bread & whole grain options
 - Bread 12, 16, 18, 20, and 24 oz
 - English Muffins 12 oz
 - Bagels 16, 18, and 20 oz
 - Bulgur 16 oz or larger
 - Brown rice 14 oz or larger
 - Corn masa flour 22oz or larger
 - Tortillas 16oz
 - Oatmeal 16 or 18oz

CEREAL

- Issued in units of ounces (oz)
- Buy a combination of cereals in 12oz boxes/bags or larger

BEANS, PEAS, LENTILS, AND PEANUT BUTTER

- Peanut butter and beans issued in units of containers (CTR)
- The number of CTR determines the combinations that can be purchased.
- For each CTR on the Family Shopping List, choose from the following options:
 - 1 (16 to 18 oz) jar of peanut butter
 - 4 (15 to 16 oz) cans of beans
 - 1 (1 pound) bag of dry beans

CANNED FISH

- Issued in units of ounces (oz)
- Flavored tuna and sardines are allowed
- Buy a combination of canned tuna, salmon, or sardines in 2.5-oz or larger cans or pouches
- Majority of sizes are 2.5, 2.6, 3, 5, and 5oz

COW'S MILK, LACTOSE-FREE MILK, SOY MILK

- Issued in units of gallons and half gallons (GAL/HGL)
- Purchase the fat content of milk (whole or skim%) that is listed on the Family Shopping List
- Buy gallon sized containers whenever possible, but half gallons are allowed
- Lactose Free is available in 64oz and 96oz containers
 - Purchasing 96oz containers will not allow the full nutrition benefit to be obtained

February 2026

41

The Shopping - Details

It's in the Details

- Family Shopping List
- Bnft App
- Interactive Food Guide
- Staff Resources
 - Illinois WIC Food Package Tables
 - WIC Food Substitutions Made Simple
 - WIC Shopping Guide
 - Illinois WIC - Infant Formula

42

Illinois WIC Food Package Tables

WIC food packages and nutrition education are the primary means by which WIC affects the dietary quality and habits of participants. Food packages provide supplemental foods designed to address the specific nutritional needs of the WIC eligible population who are at nutritional risk. The Illinois WIC foods have been selected based on nutrient content criteria established by federal regulation and Department specification. Refer to IL WIC PM Supplemental Foods, Sections 4 and 7 for additional information and IL WIC PM Addendum Minimum Requirements and Specifications for Supplemental Foods for minimum standards each food must meet to be included on the Authorized Food List.

Education on Food and Formula Benefits

Providing education on shopping for and the use of WIC benefits is essential for participants to be successful in their shopping experience and obtaining their full nutrition benefit. WIC staff must follow policy to provide the required education, referrals, and related materials. Some key educational points are listed below.

- **More Choice at the Store.** Certain food categories have been expanded to increase participant choice at the point of purchase. Education should explain the available options within these expanded categories that includes formula, milk, whole grains, beans and peanut butter.
- **Product Size Matters.** Choosing certain package sizes may not use the full benefit and can leave amounts remaining. For participants to get the most from the monthly allowance, they should check package sizes before buying. For example, cereal in 12, 18, 24, or 36-ounce boxes are more likely to use the full cereal benefit.
- **It's in the Details.** The Family Shopping List (FSL) provides the most detail regarding participants benefits and should be reviewed and offered at each visit. Review the FSL, Illinois Authorized WIC Food List and the Interactive Food Guide to facilitate education on successful shopping such as allowable brands, sizes and what is not allowed for purchase, type of milk, yogurt, use of the Cash Value Benefit (CVB) for fruits and vegetables and herbs, how to purchase dry or canned beans, etc.
- **Don't Wait!** Participants should not wait until the end of the benefit period to redeem as technical issues, product availability, etc. could impact ability to purchase.
- **Know Where to Shop.** Refer to the Authorized WIC Vendor List, Store Type column to educate participants on where to purchase benefits.

Authorized Vendor	Store Type Column
Grocer	WIC Foods & Contract Formula Only
Grocery with Pharmacy	All WIC Eligible Products
Pharmacy	All Formula Only NO FOOD
Commissary	All WIC Eligible Products
WIC Food Grocery	All WIC Eligible Products

- **Ask for Help.** Some stores will have formula products behind a locked cabinet or elsewhere in the store, participants should request assistance if they are not able to locate a specific formula.
- **Start Small.** Instruct participants who are issued formula products to buy 1 or 2 containers first to ensure tolerance. WIC cannot replace redeemed benefits.

43

Food	UOM	Food Description	Shopping List Description	EBT Receipt Description
Cheese	LB	Cheese	Cheese – Block or Sliced	Cheese
Tofu	LB	Tofu	Tofu	Tofu
Eggs	DOZ	Eggs	Eggs	Eggs
Cereal	OZ	Cereal	Cereal	Cereal
Beans and Peanut Butter		Beans and Peanut Butter	Beans/Peanut Butter – 15-16oz Can Beans, 16oz Dry Beans, 16-18oz Peanut Butter	Beans/Peanut Butter
Fish	OZ	Canned Fish	Canned Fish – Chunk Light Tuna, Pink Salmon, or Sardines	Canned Fish
Infant Cereal		Infant Cereal	Infant Cereal	Infant Cereal
Jarred Infant Fruits and Vegetables	OZ	Jarred Infant Fruits and Vegetables	Jarred Infant Fruits and Vegetables	Infant Fruit & Veg
Infant Meats	OZ	Jarred Infant Meats	Jarred Infant Meats	Infant Meats
Whole Grains	OZ	Whole Grains	Whole Wheat Bread, buns, bagels, English Muffins, Tortilla, Pasta, Brown Rice, Bulgur, Corn Masa, Corn Tortilla, Oatmeal	Whole Wheat/Grains
Fruit and Vegetable CVB	\$5	Fruits and Vegetables – Cash Value Benefit	Fruits/Vegetables – Fresh, Frozen, or Canned, and Fresh Herbs	Fruits/Vegetables
Yogurt- Whole	QT	Yogurt – Whole Milk and Low Fat	Yogurt- Whole Milk and Low Fat	Yogurt – Whole Milk
Yogurt – Non Fat	QT	Yogurt – Non Fat	Yogurt – Non Fat and Low Fat	Yogurt – Non/Low Fat
Whole Milk	GAL/HGL	Whole Milk	Milk – Whole, Lactose-Free, Soy (Gallon/ Half Gallon)	Milk - Whole
Low Fat/Skim Milk	GAL/HGL	Low Fat/Skim Milk	Milk – Low Fat or Skim, Lactose-Free, Soy (Gallon/Half Gallon)	Milk – Low Fat/Skim
Juice	CTR	Juice – Fruit or Vegetables	Juice – Fruit or Vegetable	Juice

44

CORE PACKAGE – FPIV-B CHILDREN 2 THROUGH 4 YEARS

Food Category	Max Allowed	Food Item	Quantity	Form
Low Fat/Skim Milk	4.00 (16-qt)	Low Fat/Skim Milk (Choose at the store between Gov's Milk, Lactose Free and Soy)	4.00	GAL
Fruit and Vegetable CVB	26.00	Fruits and Vegetables – Cash Value Benefit	26.00	\$\$\$
Juice	1.00	Juice – Fruit or Vegetable	1.00	CTR
Beans and Peanut Butter	1.00	Beans and Peanut Butter (Choose at the store between dry or canned beans or peanut butter)	1.00	CTR
Eggs	1.00	Eggs	1.00	DOZ
Cereal	36.00	Cereal	36.00	OZ
Fish	6.00	Canned Fish	6.00	OZ
Whole Grains	24.00	Whole Wheat Bread and Whole Grains	24.00	OZ

Substitutions:

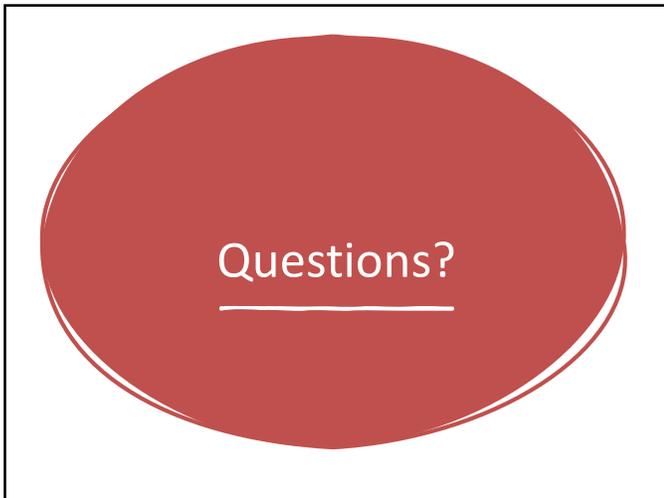
Core Food	Package Size	Substitution Amount	Description	Substitution Amount
Low Fat/Skim Milk	LB	1 pound	Cheese	3 qts exchanged for 1 lb
	LB	1-16 pounds	Tofu	1 qt exchanged for 1 lb
	QT	1-2 quarts	Yogurt	1 qt exchanged for 1 qt
	QT	16 quarts	UHT Milk	Equal exchange
	GAL	8 – ½ gallons (16 quarts)	Kosher Milk	Equal exchange
Core Food	Package Size	Substitution Amount	Description	Substitution Amount
Juice	\$\$\$	\$3.00	Fruits and Vegetables – Cash Value Benefit	64 oz exchanged for \$3
Core Food	Package Size	Substitution Amount	Description	Substitution Amount
Eggs	CTR	1 lb dry, 64oz canned, or 18oz peanut butter (choose at the store)	Beans and Peanut Butter	1 doz exchanged for 1 lb dry, 64 oz canned, or 18 oz peanut butter

45

Family Shopping List Example

1 DOZ	EGGS	
36 OZ	CEREAL	
2 CTR	BEANS/PEANUT BUTTER 15-16OZ CAN BEANS, 16OZ DRY BEANS, 16-18OZ PEANUT BUTTER	
15 OZ	CANNED FISH-CHUNK LIGHT TUNA, PINK SALMON, OR SARDINES	
48 OZ	WHOLE WHEAT BREAD, BUNS, BAGELS, ENGLISH MUFFINS, TORTILLA, PASTA, BROWN RICE, BULGUR, CORN MASA, CORN TORTILLA, OATMEAL	
52 \$\$\$	FRUITS/VEGETABLES-FRESH, FROZEN, OR CANNED, AND FRESH HERBS	
5 GAL	MILK-LOW FAT OR SKIM, LACTOSE FREE, SOY (GALLON/HALF GALLON)	
1 CTR	JUICE - FRUIT OR VEGETABLE	
		3 CTR BEANS/PEANUT BUTTER 15-16OZ CAN BEANS, 16OZ DRY BEANS, 16-18OZ PEANUT BUTTER
		15 OZ CANNED FISH-CHUNK LIGHT TUNA, PINK SALMON, OR SARDINES
		8 OZ INFANT CEREAL
		64 OZ JARRED INFANT FRUITS AND VEGETABLES
		48 OZ WHOLE WHEAT BREAD, BUNS, BAGELS, ENGLISH MUFFINS, TORTILLA, PASTA, BROWN RICE, BULGUR, CORN MASA, CORN TORTILLA, OATMEAL
		66 \$\$\$ FRUITS/VEGETABLES-FRESH, FROZEN, OR CANNED, AND FRESH HERBS
		4 CTR SIMILAC ADVANCE 12.4OZ, SIMILAC TOTAL COMFORT 12.6OZ, SIMILAC SOY ISOMIL 12.4OZ, SIMILAC SENSITIVE 12.5OZ
		22 QT ULTRA HIGH TEMPERATURE (UHT) - LOW FAT/SKIM

46



47