

### BLASTFAX

#### **The New Georgia WIC Food Package: The Impact on Your Practice**

**Effective October 1, 2009**, the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) will be changing the food packages that participants receive. The changes to the food packages align with the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans and infant feeding practice guidelines of the American Academy of Pediatrics.

#### ***The New Food Package Contains:***

- *New Whole Grain Options (Whole Wheat Bread / Brown Rice / Whole Grain Tortillas)*
- *Whole Grain Cereals- At least half of the cereals MUST be Whole Grains*
- *Required issuance of low fat milk for children over 2 years of age and women*
- *Soy Milk and Tofu allowed*
- *Fruit and Vegetable Voucher (Fresh / Frozen / Canned)*
- *Baby foods - fruits and vegetables for all infants and meat for exclusively breastfed infants*
- *Quantities of milk, eggs, juice and cheese are reduced for women and children*

The new food packages better promote and support the establishment of successful, long-term breastfeeding, provide WIC participants with a wider variety of foods including fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and provide greater flexibility in tailoring food packages to accommodate the cultural food preferences of WIC participants.

#### ***Major Medical Documentation Changes:***

Approximately 51% of Georgia infants and children qualify for the WIC program, which means a significant number of your patients are receiving WIC benefits. These changes will not only affect the choices of foods that your patients can receive but it will also require you to individualize the package based off your patient's unique medical needs. Significant changes have been made for the process for writing WIC prescriptions for special formulas & medical foods. The new forms must be filled out correctly in order for your patients to receive the full benefit. If you have any questions on completing the form please contact Kylia Crane, RD, LD 404-881-5093 or [kcrane@gaaap.org](mailto:kcrane@gaaap.org)

#### ***Summary of Major Changes:***

- All special formulas must be prescribed in ounces (reconstituted fluid) per day
- Prescriptions/Medical Documentation must have an original signature. No signature stamps will be accepted and can ONLY be signed by a physician, physician assistant, or nurse practitioner
- Non-Specific Diagnoses will not be accepted for special formulas and medical foods. See FAQ - below.
- Must list diagnosis and ICD-9/ICD-10 code
- Must specify foods allowed for all clients on special formulas (age 6 months & older).
- Physician must authorize the issuance of any tofu or soy milk to children
- Children age 2 and older will only be issued low-fat milk
- Children age 12-23 months will only receive whole fat milk

#### ***To access the New Medical Documentation Forms:***

<http://health.state.ga.us/programs/wic/wicformula.asp>

#### ***For more information on the new food packages, visit the WIC & Nutrition page on the Chapter's website:***

<http://www.gaaap.org/WIC.htm>

If you have any questions, please contact the Chapter's WIC/Nutrition Coordinator, Kylia Crane, RD, LD, at 404-881-5093 or [kcrane@gaaap.org](mailto:kcrane@gaaap.org).

**Stanley Cohen, MD, FAAP**

*Chairman, Committee on Nutrition*

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) – New Georgia WIC Medical Documentation

- 1. How often do WIC participants need to provide new medical documentation paperwork?**

Medical Documentation must be renewed at least every 6 months. New copies must also be provided at every certification appointment if the date the most recent medical documentation form was signed is more than 30 days old at the time of the certification appointment.
- 2. Can WIC accept a verbal order for medical documentation?**

Yes, if the verbal order contains all of the required information. Only one month of vouchers may be issued to the participant. The WIC clinic must receive written medical documentation within 2 weeks of the verbal order. No additional vouchers may be issued until written medical documentation is received (e.g., cannot accept a 2<sup>nd</sup> verbal order).
- 3. Which infants ages 6-11 months are eligible to receive more formula if they cannot tolerate solid foods?**

Only infants who have a qualifying medical condition **and** who are receiving an “exempt infant formula” or a “medical food” are eligible to receive additional formula in place of solid foods, if medically indicated. Infants ages 6-11 months who are receiving a standard “infant formula” cannot receive additional formula even if they are unable to consume solid foods (e.g., are being tube-fed a standard infant formula).
- 4. What are examples of qualifying conditions for issuing tofu, soy milk, or extra cheese on Form #2?**

Tofu or Soy Milk = Lactose intolerance, vegan / vegetarian diet, milk protein allergy, religious / cultural reasons. Extra Cheese = Lactose intolerance, underweight per BMI, inadequate weight gain during pregnancy, increased calorie needs due to a medical condition or illness.
- 5. What are examples of non-specific medical diagnoses that cannot be accepted on Form #1?**

Colic, milk allergy, multiple food allergies, spitting up, milk intolerance, formula intolerance, feeding problems, feeding difficulties, picky eater, poor appetite, inadequate intake, constipation, cramps, digestive disturbances, fussiness, gas. The following diagnoses must have another **underlying medical condition** present and documented: “underweight,” “inadequate / poor weight gain,” “inadequate / poor growth,” and “feeding disorder.” The Georgia WIC Program cannot accept any of these diagnoses alone – a more specific, primary medical condition must be present and listed among the diagnoses (e.g., Cerebral Palsy, Failure To Thrive, Oral-Motor Feeding Disorder, Prematurity, Dysphagia, etc.).
- 6. What if the number of ounces of formula prescribed per day on Form #1 is more or less than WIC can issue to a participant?**

If the health care provider prescribes *more* than the maximum monthly allowance of special formula or medical food for any participant, WIC will issue the maximum monthly amount allowed by WIC policy.

If the health care provider prescribes *less* than the maximum monthly allowance of special formula or medical food on Form #1 for an infant, WIC must still issue the maximum monthly allowance based on age and feeding method. This is to ensure that the full nutritional benefit is provided and to account for infant age changes and corresponding formula maximum allowance changes that may occur during the 1-6 month time period during which the medical documentation is valid.

If the health care provider prescribes *less* than the maximum monthly allowance of special formula or medical food on Form #1 for a child or woman, WIC must only issue the amount prescribed by the health care provider in addition to any authorized supplemental foods.
- 7. Can WIC accept a range of ounces for the formula prescribed per day on Form #1?**

Yes. Ranges of formula can be accepted. However, the amount of special formula or medical food issued to the participant can never exceed the maximum monthly allowance based on WIC policy.
- 8. Can the health care provider write “up to,” “ad lib,” “PRN,” or “WIC maximum” for the amount of formula prescribed per day on Form #1?**

No. An actual quantity of formula must be listed.
- 9. What is the cutoff for accepting medical documentation based on the date it was signed by the provider?**

Medical documentation must have been signed by the health care provider no more than 30 days prior to when it is received by the WIC clinic.