

**Key messages of the:**

*Colorado WIC Program Concept Paper: Food Packages for Breastfeeding Participants:*

- ✎ WIC policy states that all WIC staff have these responsibilities:
  - 1) Promoting and supporting breastfeeding is the responsibility of all WIC staff.
  - 2) Educating all mothers throughout the prenatal and early postpartum period about the benefits of exclusive breastfeeding.
  - 3) Not routinely providing formula to breastfed babies during the first four weeks of life while mother is establishing her milk supply.
  - 4) Performing assessments, providing education and using participant centered approaches to understanding each individual request for formula from a breastfeeding mother, and to determine the appropriateness of supplementation.
  - 5) Documenting a mother's plan for breastfeeding in her nutrition education record.
  
- ✎ Medical situations exist for appropriate use of supplements (short-term and long-term) to breastfeeding in the first month.
  
- ✎ When formula is issued to breastfeeding infants, staff should provide the minimum amount needed remembering that WIC is a supplemental program and mothers will have greater breastfeeding success if they continue to empty their breasts.
  
- ✎ Highlight the value of the exclusive breastfeeding food package.
  
- ✎ The labels on the infant food packages (exclusively, partially, novel) do not describe the infant's ASPENS breastfeeding descriptions (exclusive, substantial, partial, token).

# Colorado WIC Program Concept Paper

## Food Packages for Breastfeeding Participants

### *Section I: Background*

#### **I. Purpose**

The WIC program is federally mandated to promote and support long term breastfeeding. Extensive research, especially in recent years, documents diverse and compelling advantages to infants, mothers, families, and society due to breastfeeding and the use of human milk. In accordance with all major medical organizations and the American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement, *Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk*, each woman enrolled in the WIC Program will be encouraged to breastfeed exclusively for the first six months after birth, at which point gradual introduction of iron-enriched solid foods should complement the breast milk diet. The academy also recommends that breastfeeding continue for at least 12 months, and thereafter for as long as mutually desired between mother and infant. **In order for mother and infant to receive the greatest health benefits from breastfeeding, breastfeeding should be exclusive and continue over time.** The longer the time, the greater the protection breastfeeding provides mother and infant. Colorado WIC Program staff will promote breastfeeding as the norm and will recommend every woman breastfeed, unless breastfeeding is contraindicated for health reasons. WIC staff must support the goal to have the majority of participants breastfeed exclusively.

The majority (over 75%) of Colorado WIC mothers start breastfeeding. Breastfeeding success is dependent upon the protection of a mother's milk supply. The amount of milk a mother produces depends on the frequency and effectiveness of the infant's suckling at the breast. When a mother is able to adequately nourish her growing infant, she will develop confidence in her ability to feed. Early supplements of formula are associated with breastfeeding complications and early weaning. Giving formula supplements during the first four weeks of life is generally detrimental to successful long-term breastfeeding.

#### **II. Policy Statement**

Promoting and supporting breastfeeding is the responsibility of all WIC staff. To ensure a mother's milk supply is fully established and to support exclusive breastfeeding, formula will not be routinely provided to breastfed babies before they complete four weeks of age. All pregnant and breastfeeding participants will be made aware of this policy. This message will be part of a broader effort that educates mothers throughout pregnancy, and provides support and follow-up after delivery. There will be some mothers who choose not to breastfeed and they will continue to be treated with respect.

Any request for formula by a breastfeeding mother, regardless of infant's age, requires readily available breastfeeding support and advice from WIC staff. In situations where staff is unable to determine if formula is necessary, the situation must be appropriately assessed by a specially trained staff member to determine the appropriateness of supplementation for the infant. All current employees and applicants for positions with WIC must agree that they understand and will support this policy.

#### **III. Procedures**

During the prenatal period all pregnant women, and during the postpartum period all breastfeeding women will be made aware of the policy that Colorado WIC does not routinely provide formula to breastfed infants who are younger than one month of age. At a minimum, this message will be given during the prenatal enrollment, during the last WIC prenatal (individual or group) visit before the expected delivery date, and during the first postpartum contact.

Staff will document a mother's plan for breastfeeding in her nutrition education plan. In those few instances that formula is provided to supplement breast milk during the first month of life, staff will document reasons in the infant's nutrition education plan.

## **Prenatal Breastfeeding Discussions**

**Certification Visit:** The breastfeeding goal of this visit is to get the mother talking about breastfeeding, assess her knowledge of breastfeeding, and to address her questions or concerns.

- Learn mother's breastfeeding intentions. Suggested questions to start conversation: *What have you heard about breastfeeding? What are your thoughts about breastfeeding? How confident are you about breastfeeding? What were your previous breastfeeding experiences like? What was the best thing/most challenging thing about breastfeeding?*
- Address concerns, offer solutions, and explore options. Mothers who state that they plan to breastfeed and formula-feed must be educated about the risks to milk supply due to early formula supplementation.
- Inform mother of ways WIC supports breastfeeding:
  - Extra foods for mother and older infant (remind mothers of the cost of formula, and to consider that the amount of food infants receive is reduced if they receive formula). See Tables I and II in appendix.
  - Mother and baby certified through first year
  - Not routinely providing formula to breastfeeding infants to protect milk supply
  - Tailored food packages so that mothers don't supplement with more formula than necessary or intended
  - Breastfeeding information and consultation
  - Breastfeeding education classes
  - Breast pumps available for certain needs
  - Breastfeeding peer counselors (if available)
  - Weight checks for infants
- If a mother's certification visit is late in her pregnancy, follow the steps outlined for the certification visit. Assess mother's breastfeeding intentions, and as appropriate, review concepts outlined under third prenatal visit.

**Second Prenatal Visit:** The breastfeeding goal of this visit is to follow up on the previous discussion.

Suggested questions to start conversation: *Have you thought any more about breastfeeding? What questions or concerns do you have about breastfeeding?*

- Provide anticipatory guidance to address insufficient milk supply which is the main reason that women give for why they stop breastfeeding. Suggested question to start conversation: *What have you heard about how to build a good milk supply?* Six points to make if mother is not aware:
  - 1) Adequate milk supply is the key to successful breastfeeding.
  - 2) Can take 4-6 weeks to establish.
  - 3) Exclusive breastfeeding is crucial.
  - 4) The more milk the baby takes, the more milk the mother makes.
  - 5) During growth spurts, mothers need to nurse more often for a few days to build a supply that meets demand.
  - 6) For these reasons, WIC does not give supplemental formula during the first month to support exclusive breastfeeding.
- Learn who mother's support network for breastfeeding is (e.g., baby's father, friends, family, co-workers). Mother may not have supportive friends or family. Encourage mother to invite a friend or family member to learn more about breastfeeding by joining her at her WIC appointments or breastfeeding class.
- Provide information about breastfeeding classes, support groups, or peer counselors (if available).

**Third Prenatal visit:** The breastfeeding goal of this visit is to discuss topics related to getting breastfeeding off to a good start, and where to get help in the first weeks.

- Review "Can Do 5!" crib card, and explain hospital practices that support building milk supply. Encourage mothers get help with latch before leaving the hospital.
- Encourage exclusive breastfeeding, and explain why supplemental formula should only be used for medical reasons.
- Give a list of phone numbers of where to get breastfeeding help after discharge from the hospital. If feasible for clinic staff, ask for permission to call mother after delivery.
- Discuss how to know if the baby is getting enough milk.
- Review availability of breast pumps (WIC has breast pumps available for certain circumstances).
- Teach hand expression using either a video or handout.

### *Section III: Postpartum Care*

#### **Postpartum Breastfeeding Support and Education**

During new mother's first postpartum visit or if contact is made by phone prior to the visit, staff will support breastfeeding mothers and inform them of the policy that Colorado WIC supports exclusive breastfeeding by not routinely giving formula to breastfed infants younger than 1 month of age. Staff should refrain from statements such as, "Would you like a can or two of formula, just in case?" Instead, offer mothers information about where to get help with breastfeeding.

***First contact/visit*** (in clinic or by phone): While not required, it is considered a *best practice* to make a supportive phone call within 1 week of expected delivery date to learn if the mother has had her baby, how breastfeeding is going, and to encourage her to come in to the WIC office soon. Other normal protocols for follow up and support of the breastfeeding dyad follow:

- Offer congratulations and praise
- Find out if mother is experiencing any breastfeeding problems or has any questions.
  - Provide referrals and other resources as appropriate
- Review the Health Questionnaire. Discuss how to know baby is getting enough breast milk. Assess for an appropriate number of feedings, wet or dirty diapers, etc.
- Use the "Early Breastfeeding Screening Tool" for ideas to guide the conversation and assessment.
- Discuss hunger and satiety cues, and growth spurts
- Discuss exclusive breastfeeding during the first month.
- Give mother the voucher for baby that says "*Congratulations—Thank you for Breastfeeding.*" Since her infant is exclusively breastfeeding, provide anticipatory guidance that the infant's future checks will contain twice the amount of baby food fruits and vegetables and will include baby food meats.
- On the mother's exclusively breastfeeding checks, point out the extra foods and the important nutrients they provide.

## **Infant Food Package Issuance Based on Age of Infant and Breastfeeding Assessment**

### **Infant younger than 4 weeks of age**

- 1) Infant is exclusively breastfed: An **exclusively breastfed** infant should receive the voucher that states, “*Thank you for breastfeeding,*” and the mother should receive an Exclusively Breastfeeding food package for that month and following months.
- 2) Feeding breast milk and formula: An infant who is being breastfed and formula fed will *not* receive a food package for formula *unless* medically indicated (examples below) or staff conducts a thorough assessment and determines that the mother will not be breastfeeding long-term. If the mother reports she is breastfeeding and offering formula, staff must find out why formula is being used or requested, and consider the age of the infant and amount of formula being routinely offered. The counseling may be done by the educator or passed on to a WIC RD, RN, or Lactation Management Specialist depending on the situation.

Medical indication: Described below are medical indications that may pose a temporary or long term problem for breastfeeding and require supplementation of formula or banked human milk (although not available through WIC). Staff must work with mothers to determine the amount of formula that the food package shall contain. Staff should provide the minimum amount of formula that is needed, remembering that WIC is a supplemental program and that mothers will have greater breastfeeding success when maintain milk production by emptying their breasts. Based on the amount of formula given, the mother will receive the Novel Breastfeeding food package since she is not exclusively breastfeeding.

#### Maternal medical indications:

- Breast anatomical challenges (e.g., tubular breasts or marked breast asymmetry, inverted nipples for which shields and pumping alone will not suffice)
- Breast surgery (e.g., reduction, augmentation, abscesses, cancer)
- Endocrine abnormality (e.g., diabetes, pituitary insufficiency - noted as a lack of noticeable breast enlargement during pregnancy, failure of lactogenesis state 2 – milk did not noticeably come in)
- Polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS). Many mothers with PCOS have no problems with breastfeeding, but recent research shows that mothers with PCOS are at greater risk for insufficient milk supply. On the other hand, about one-third of women with PCOS report problems with oversupply.
- Perinatal complications (e.g., hypertension, hemorrhage, retained placental fragments)
- Contraindicated medication
- Severe obesity

#### Infant medical indications:

- Premature (<37 weeks) or very low birth weight
- Excessive weight loss (not regained birth weight by 10 days of age or loss of more than 10% of birth weight)
- Acute dehydration not responsive to routine breastfeeding
- Breast milk jaundice
- Hypoglycemia
- Inborn errors of metabolism (e.g., PKU)
- Special formula needed
- Not feeding well at discharge and sent home pumping with a formula supplement (should be followed by a physician within 24-72 hours after discharge).

WIC staff will ask mothers of infants who are receiving medically-indicated temporary supplementation what length of time the doctor recommended the supplement, particularly if the need is for a standard formula and there is no prescription. If the mother does not know, staff will recommend she contact her infant’s provider.

## Infant less than 4 weeks of age (continued)

No medical indication: If there is no medical indication, provide information and troubleshoot with the mother in order for the mother to receive the Exclusively Breastfeeding food package. Find out mother's plan or goal for breastfeeding. Inform mother of alternatives to formula such as expressing breast milk by hand or with a manual or electric breast pump. Lack of confidence in her ability to breastfeed may be a key factor explaining early formula supplementation. Address mothers' issues by suggesting ways to handle them. For example, if "baby acts hungry," then staff should offer ways to increase milk supply. If "baby is doing great with combined formula feedings and breastfeeding," then staff should educate about full breastfeeding to establish a milk supply.

Situations in which mothers choose not to receive the Exclusively Breastfeeding food package should be rare, and should occur only after extensive evaluation and counseling by the RD, RN, or Lactation Management Specialist. Some non-medical reasons mothers may present could include:

- Returning to work within one week and has no desire/ability to pump
- Intent to wean over the next couple of weeks

If after counseling and education the mother insists she receive formula, change the infant's and the mother's food packages to the needs of the infant. **Staff must work with mothers to determine the amount of formula the food package shall contain.** If formula is given, staff will not issue a full package simply because it is available. Rather, staff should provide the minimum amount of formula that is needed, remembering that WIC is a supplemental program and that mothers will have greater breastfeeding success when they continue to empty their breasts. The amount of formula the infant receives will determine which food package the mother receives.

The mother will receive the Novel Breastfeeding food package since she is not exclusively breastfeeding. Work with the mother to create food packages for the following months that best support her breastfeeding plan, explaining that smaller formula packages may enable her to receive the Partially Breastfeeding food package.

- 3) Infant not breastfed: A fully formula-fed infant should receive a formula food package, and the mother should get the Postpartum, Non-Breastfeeding food package. Mothers who choose not to breastfeed will continue to be treated with respect.

## Infants over 1 month of age

- 1) An **exclusively breastfed** infant should receive the "Thank you for breastfeeding" voucher and the mother should receive the Exclusively Breastfeeding food package. Congratulate and praise the mother for her breastfeeding efforts, and encourage her to continue exclusively breastfeeding through her infants first six months of life.
- 2) Feeding breast milk and formula: If the mother reports that she is breastfeeding and offering formula, find out why formula is being used or requested. Inquire what the mother's breastfeeding plan or goal is. Depending on the situation, counseling may be done by the educator or can be passed on to a WIC RD, RN, or Lactation Management Specialist. Discuss with mother the alternatives to formula, such as breast milk collected by hand, or manual or electric breast pump expression. After counseling and education if the mother insists she receive formula, change the infant's and the mother's food packages based on the needs of the infant. Staff must work with mothers to determine the amount of formula the food package shall contain. When possible staff should provide the minimum amount of formula that is needed,\* remembering that WIC is a supplemental program and that mothers will have greater breastfeeding success when they continue to empty their breasts. The amount of formula the infant receives will determine which food package the mother receives. Explain that smaller formula packages may enable her to receive the Partially Breastfeeding food package.

\*Refer to the references ranges on page 4 of the Breastfeeding Section of the Mini-Manual, Providing Supplemental Formula for Non-Exclusively Breastfed Infants.

## *Section V: Women's Food Packages*

### **Women's Food Package Issuance Based on Breastfeeding Assessment**

A mother's food package is based on breastfeeding assessment, the age of her infant, and how much, if any, supplemental formula her infant receives from WIC. A mother's food package is reduced if she accepts formula supplements. See Table III: Description of Food Packages in appendix, and note:

Mothers' food package label prefixes begin with these letters.

B\_\_\_\_: Exclusively Breastfeeding food packages\*

P\_\_\_\_: Partially Breastfeeding with a quantity of formula received *in range* of partially breastfeeding

N\_\_\_\_: Novel Breastfeeding, *not in range* of partially breastfeeding; also used for *postpartum, non-breastfeeding* woman receiving a full formula package for infant.

### **\*Exclusively Breastfeeding Multiples**

Women who exclusively breastfeed multiple infants, such as twins, receive 1.5 times the normal exclusively breastfeeding package averaged over 2 months.

The food package label will begin with "BM\_\_\_\_" (Breastfeeding Multiples).

### **Important detail to understand:**

Exclusively, partially, and novel breastfeeding only describe the type of food package. These labels DO NOT describe the infant's breastfeeding description in ASPENS. The 4 descriptions in ASPENS remain the same: Exclusive, Substantial, Partial and Token. The new system will have new descriptions.

#### IV. Appendix

**Table I: Breastfeeding Women's Food Packages**

| <b>Breastfeeding Women receive...</b> | <b>Exclusively Breastfeeding</b><br>(no WIC formula) | <b>Partially Breastfeeding</b><br>(formula in specific range given) | <b>Novel Breastfeeding</b><br>(more formula than in range given) |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|--|
| Milk (gallons)                        | <b>5 gal + 1 qt</b>                                  | 4 ½ gal + 1 qt  | 3 gal + 1 qt   |
| Cheese (pounds)                       | <b>2</b>   | 1   | 1  |
| Eggs (dozen)                          | <b>2</b>   | 1   | 1  |
| Juice (12-oz cans)                    | <b>3</b>   | <b>3</b>  | 2  |
| Breakfast cereal (ounces)             | 36   | 36  | 36   |
| Whole grains (pounds)                 | <b>1</b>   | <b>1</b>  | --   |
| Dry beans<br>and/or peanut butter     | 1 lb<br><b>and 18 oz</b>                             | 1 lb<br><b>and 18 oz</b>  | 1 lb<br><i>or 18 oz</i>  |
| Canned fish                           | <b>30 oz</b>   | --  | --   |
| Fruit & vegetable voucher             | <b>\$10</b>  | \$8   | \$8  |

**Table II: Breastfed Infant's Food Packages, 6 – 12 months of age**

| <b>Breastfeeding infants 6 months &amp; older receive...</b> | <b>Exclusively Breastfeeding</b><br>(no WIC formula) | <b>Partially Breastfeeding</b><br>(formula in specific range given) | <b>Novel Breastfeeding</b><br>(more formula than in range given) |
|--|--|---|--|
|  | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>(no WIC formula)            | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>(1 to 3 cans formula)                      | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>(4 to 7 cans formula)                   |
| Infant cereal (boxes)  | 2  | 2   | 2  |
| Bananas (pounds fresh)                                       | 2  | 2   | 2  |
| Baby food fruits & vegetables (jars)                         | <b>60</b>  | 28  | 28   |
| Baby food meats (jars)                                       | <b>31</b>  | --  | --   |

**Table III:  
Descriptions of Food Packages**

|  | Each month       | Infant Age:   |   |  |  |
|--|------------------|---|---|--|--|
|  |                  | Birth - 1 month   | 1 – 3 months  | 4 – 5 months   | 6 – 12 months  |
| <b>Exclusively Breastfeeding</b><br>(Infant does not receive WIC formula)<br>Woman's eligibility category: B   | <b>Mom gets</b>  | Exclusively BF Package (B____)                          | Exclusively BF Package (B____)                          | Exclusively BF Package (B____)                           | Exclusively BF Package (B____)   |
|  | <b>Baby gets</b> | (IO001)   | Mom's Priceless Breastmilk!<br>No formula<br>(IO001)    | JO0001   | Priceless Breastmilk!/no formula<br>2-3 (8oz) boxes baby cereal<br>2 pounds fresh bananas<br>60 4oz jars baby fruits/vegetables<br>31 2.5oz jars baby food meat<br>(KO001/LO001) |
| <b>Partially Breastfeeding</b><br>(Infant receives amount of formula in specific range for partially breastfeeding; also called <b>IN RANGE</b> )<br>Woman's eligibility category: B | <b>Mom gets</b>  | N/A   | Partially BF Package (P____)                            | Partially BF Package (P____)                             | Partially BF Package (P____)   |
|  | <b>Baby gets</b> | N/A   | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>1 to 4 cans formula<br>(I____) | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>1 to 5 cans formula<br>(I____)  | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>1 to 4 cans formula<br>2-3 (8oz) boxes baby cereal<br>2 pounds fresh bananas<br>28 4oz jars baby fruits/vegetables<br>(K____ and L____)                 |
| <b>Novel Breastfeeding</b><br>(Infant receives more formula than in range for partially breastfeeding, also called <b>NOT IN RANGE</b> )<br>Woman's eligibility category: B          | <b>Mom gets</b>  | Novel BF Package (N____)                                | Novel BF Package (N____)                                | Novel BF Package (N____)                                 | <b>No food</b><br>"Thank you for Breastfeeding" voucher  |
|  | <b>Baby gets</b> | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>1 to 9 cans formula<br>(I____) | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>5 to 9 cans formula<br>(I____) | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>6 to 10 cans formula<br>(I____) | Priceless Breastmilk!<br>5 to 7 cans formula<br>2-3 (8oz) boxes baby cereal<br>2 pounds fresh bananas<br>28 4oz jars baby fruits/vegetables<br>(K____ and L____)                 |
| <b>Postpartum Non-Breastfeeding</b><br>(Infant receives <b>only</b> formula and is NOT breastfed)<br>Woman's eligibility category: N   | <b>Mom gets</b>  | Postpartum Package (N____)                              | Postpartum Package (N____)                              | Postpartum Package (N____)                               | <b>No longer eligible for WIC</b><br><b>No food package</b>  |
|  | <b>Baby gets</b> | 9 cans formula<br>(I____)                               | 9 cans formula<br>(I____)                               | 10 cans formula<br>(I____)                               | 7 cans formula<br>2-3 (8oz) boxes baby cereal<br>2 pounds fresh bananas<br>28 4oz jars baby fruits/vegetables<br>(K____ and L____)   |

Ranges refer to a standard 12.9 ounce can of powdered formula.