

WIC Fast Facts – Support Breastfeeding, Because Breastfeeding Supports Health!



Did You Know?

77.7%

of mothers who were on the WIC Program during pregnancy initiated breastfeeding vs.

64.0% of mothers not on WIC during pregnancy.



62.1%

of mothers who were on the WIC Program during pregnancy are still breastfeeding at 6 months post-partum compared to 47.6% of mothers that were not on WIC during pregnancy.

Data Source: Statewide WIC Information System: Quarterly Outcome Reports, Breastfeeding Initiation & Duration, June 2015

WIC Breastfeeding Services

- Each local WIC Program has a Breastfeeding Coordinator, designated to ensure all WIC staff implement the Connecticut WIC Program's Guidelines for Breastfeeding Promotion and Support.
- The local program Breastfeeding Coordinator can offer your staff training on WIC's Breastfeeding Support Services.
- Each local WIC Program has staff that has completed a Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) training.
- All WIC staff encourage moms to initiate breastfeeding and support them to exclusively breastfeed.
- Nutrition staff helps mothers create a goal and plan for breastfeeding.

How Can WIC and Providers Work Together?

- Initiate early discussions on infant feeding choices.
- Review Breastfeeding in Underserved Women: Increasing Initiation and Continuation of Breastfeeding.
- Support the AAP's Policy Statement on Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk, "infant feeding should not be considered as a lifestyle choice but a basic health issue."
- Encourage and support mothers to keep their babies with them during their hospital stay.
- If supplementation of a breastfed infant is medically necessary, provide your patient (WIC participants) with information on what to supplement (expressed breast milk or formula), when to supplement (after every feeding or once per day), how much to supplement and the plan for discontinuing supplementation as appropriate and/or ensure that mom can feed her infant at the breast.

Making Referrals for Breastfeeding Mothers and Babies

- Provide referrals to hospital/community based breastfeeding classes and WIC services.
- Refer pregnant and breastfeeding mothers to a WIC Peer Counseling Program if available in your area.
- Assist mothers in need of a breast pump by referring them to an appropriate Durable Medical Equipment (DME) provider or refer them to WIC nutrition staff for questions.

WIC Foods Support Breastfeeding

Did you know breastfeeding mothers receive an enhanced food benefits package from WIC? This means that breastfeeding mothers who do not receive formula from WIC receive more foods in their benefits than anyone else participating in the WIC program.

Some new additions to the food package are:

- Yogurt
- Whole wheat pasta
- Low-fat or Fat-free milk for women participants

Why WIC Supports Exclusive Breastfeeding

Exclusive breastfeeding allows a baby to develop a healthy digestive system and decreases the risks for many childhood diseases such as diarrhea and ear infections. Exclusive breastfeeding also decreases the risk of maternal illnesses and/or diseases including ovarian cancer and diabetes. The introduction of formula at any time can immediately disrupt the healthy balance of good bacteria in the baby's GI tract thus limiting breastfeeding benefits.

As defined by the World Health Organization (WHO) - the infant only receives breast milk without any additional food or drink, not even water, until 6 months of age.

Exclusive breastfeeding is recommended until 6 months of age by American Academy of Pediatrics as well as the Connecticut Department of Public Health and the Connecticut WIC Program.



Secrets of Baby Behavior

The Secrets of Baby Behavior is a training program, developed by the California WIC Program and UC Davis Human Lactation Center which helps health care professionals communicate with parents and caregivers around infant behaviors, specifically infant cues regarding sleep, hunger and crying. Responding to early infant cues can promote successful breastfeeding. Many WIC staff are trained in this program.

For more information on the Secrets of Baby Behavior trainings, contact one of the State WIC Breastfeeding Coordinators at 1-800-741-2142.

WIC Peer Counseling Programs

What is the Peer Counseling Program?

A WIC peer counselor is another mother who has participated in WIC, breastfed her own baby and is passionate about helping other mothers enjoy breastfeeding. WIC Peer Counselors complete USDA developed competency based training with an International Board Certified Lactation Consultant (IBCLC) or Registered Dietitian (RD) prior to counseling new moms. Peers also receive continuing education to keep current on emerging topics.

There are 3 WIC program-based and 2 hospital-based Peer Counseling programs in Connecticut.

- **Optimus Health Care WIC Program**
Bridgeport (203) 333-9200
- **Fair Haven Community Health Center WIC Program**
Fair Haven (203) 777-7411
- **T.V.C.C.A. WIC Program**
Norwich (860) 425-6562
- **Breastfeeding Heritage and Pride Program/WIC**
Hartford Hospital (860) 527-0856
- **Breastfeeding Heritage and Pride Program/WIC**
Yale New Haven Hospital (203) 688-3925

Breast pump Coverage and Education

Did you know Health Insurance Companies are required to provide breast pumps? Breast pumps should also come with instruction and education. WIC works with Community Health Network of CT (CHN-CT) and Department of Social Services to ensure moms on WIC get the information they need to be successful at pumping.

- WIC staff assist women with accessing a prescription and/or Prior Authorization for an appropriate breast pump (i.e. hospital grade or personal use pump) based on mom and baby's needs.

Breastfeeding Rights in CT

Did you know that mothers who choose to breastfeed have rights in Connecticut?

Breastfeeding laws include the right to breastfeed in public, the right to breastfeed or pump at work, and rights if a breastfeeding mother is called for jury duty.

Collaboration with Connecticut Breastfeeding Coalition (CBC)

Do you know about the CBC's Breastfeeding Friendly Worksite Program?

The CBC recognizes employers who assist mothers in reaching their breastfeeding goals by supporting them when they are ready to go back to work. The Connecticut Department of Public Health and Connecticut WIC Program assist employers, who support breastfeeding mothers, in their process to become recognized.

Why Breastfeeding is good for Connecticut and its communities?

- Reduces healthcare costs due to decreased hospital sick visits or hospitalizations, decreased risk of developing diabetes, obesity and allergies later in life.
- Environmentally friendly - Breastmilk is packaged and stored by the mother – there is little to no waste!
- Helping Connecticut reach Healthy People 2020 goals for breastfeeding initiation and duration.



To find out more call **1-800-741-2142**, visit ct.gov/dph/wic, or call the WIC clinic in your area.

