



PRESS RELEASE FOR LOCAL MEDIA

Central Michigan District Health Department
"Promoting Healthy Families, Healthy Communities"

For more information, please call: (989) 773-5921 ext. 8409
2012 E. Preston Avenue, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan 48858, www.cmdhd.org

To: Area Newspapers

From: Alison Fegan, CMDHD Health Educator

RE: Women, Infant and Children (WIC) Program

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Women, Infants & Children Program

The Women, Infants and Children Program (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 local 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, and infants and/or children up to five years old. WIC provides supplemental food, offers professional nutrition education, and makes referrals based on health screenings and assessments of need.

Participants in the WIC program receive an electronic card which has taken place of the paper coupons and they may use this card to redeem their benefits at any of the WIC authorized retail stores throughout Michigan. For women and children items include: milk, cheese, eggs, juices rich in Vitamin C, cereals rich in iron, and dry peas/beans or peanut butter. Breastfeeding women, who do not receive formula from WIC, may also receive tuna fish and carrots, as well as extra cheese, juice, and beans. Starting at 6 months of age, infants are eligible to receive infant cereal and juice. For infants who are partially breastfed or not breastfed, WIC provides iron-fortified formula. Fresh produce is provided to many WIC participants through Project FRESH, a Farmer's Market Nutrition Program.

Nutrition education is offered to all WIC participants or their care givers. The education must relate to the nutrition need of the individual and be of interest to them. Participants with a high risk nutrition conditions are referred to a registered dietitian for a nutrition care plan and counseling. Common nutrition education topics include: nutrition during pregnancy, infant feeding, childhood nutrition, and wise food shopping. WIC also encourages women to breastfeed because of the many health benefits for both baby and mother. In addition to registered dietitians and

registered nurses to assist clients, there are also lactation specialists to promote, encourage, and support both breastfeeding mothers and babies.

An added benefit of the WIC Program is screening for other health problems and referrals to appropriate health and social services. These referrals may be for: Medicaid, MI-Child, Healthy Kids, food stamps, immunizations, child health screening, maternal and infant support services, Children's Special Health Care Services, Family Planning services, Project FRESH, MSU Extension Family Nutrition Program and more.

To qualify for the WIC program, applicants must meet all of the following 4 criteria:

1. Fall into one of the following categories: pregnant women, breastfeeding women up to 1 year from delivery, postpartum women up to 6 months from delivery, infants or children up to their 5th birthday.
2. Resident of the state of Michigan
3. Income eligible, meeting one of the following:
 - Be at or below 185% of Federal Poverty Guidelines or
 - Be a Medicaid or food stamp recipient.
4. Determined by WIC clinic staff to be at nutrition and/or health risk. Some typical health risks are: low blood iron or anemia, too much or too little weight gain, poor diet, chronic disease, and developmental disabilities.

To find out more about the WIC program, view financial guidelines or to see if you qualify, please visit our website at www.cmdhd.org or call 1-800-26-BIRTH.

This article was provided to you by the staff at the Central Michigan District Health Department which serves Arenac, Clare, Gladwin, Isabella, Osceola and Roscommon Counties.

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