

## Breastfeeding is WIC's Business:

### Overview of Breastfeeding Promotion and Support in WIC

Up-to-date information on the Connecticut WIC Program for the Health Care Professional

#### The new WIC food packages help to protect a mother's milk supply .....

On October 1st, 2009, the Connecticut WIC Program will implement the USDA revisions to the WIC Food Packages. Breastfeeding mothers and their babies will receive a larger variety and quantity of food than other participants. Women who do not accept any formula from WIC for their breastfeeding baby will receive the largest packages, and only their infants will receive baby food meats starting at 6 months of age.

Contact the State WIC office at 1-800-741-2142 or the Breastfeeding Coordinator at your local WIC office with any questions.



#### The WIC Program promotes and supports breastfeeding .....

The WIC Program promotes breastfeeding as the normal and optimal infant feeding method. Connecticut WIC breastfeeding promotion and support guidelines require that all pregnant women be encouraged to breastfeed unless medically contraindicated. Infant formula is only issued to a breastfeeding woman for her infant after:

- ◆ her intent to continue breastfeeding is assessed
- ◆ education is provided regarding the potential impact of formula on breast milk production
- ◆ alternatives to formula supplementation are discussed
- ◆ she is informed that her food package will be reduced or eliminated

#### Low income mothers need encouragement and support to continue breastfeeding....

Breastfeeding initiation rates among WIC participants have risen steadily from approximately 30% in 1990 to over 60% in 2009. However, while more and more WIC mothers are choosing to breastfeed their infants, duration rates remain relatively low. Less than 25% of WIC infants are breastfed for at least 6 months and less than 18% for 12 months or more.

To counter this, local WIC Programs offer individual and group breastfeeding education. Connecticut WIC funds breastfeeding peer counseling programs in Hartford and New Haven. Research has shown that women who also receive encouragement and support from their physicians are more likely to meet their personal breastfeeding goals.

## The WIC Program promotes and supports breastfeeding in many other ways.....



- Since 2005, more than 100 Connecticut WIC nutritionists/dietitians have successfully completed the 45-hour Certified Lactation Counselor (CLC) course and participated in continuing education to maintain that credential.
  - Each local WIC Program has a designated *Breastfeeding Coordinator* who is responsible for ensuring that the Connecticut WIC Program's *Guidelines for Breastfeeding Promotion and Support* are carried out.
  - The State WIC Breastfeeding Coordinator chairs the WIC Breastfeeding Committee, oversees training, policy development and implementation, and directs special projects related to breastfeeding.
- The CT Department of Public Health initially funded the development and implementation of the *Breastfeeding: Heritage and Pride* (BHP) breastfeeding peer counseling program. The program is now jointly operated by Hartford Hospital and the Hispanic Health Council. The CT WIC Program partially funds the Hartford-based program and is fully funding its replication at Yale-New Haven Hospital.
  - More information on BHP and other evidence-based breastfeeding interventions is available at [http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/breastfeeding\\_interventions.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/breastfeeding/pdf/breastfeeding_interventions.pdf)
  - The WIC Program provides single-user double electric breast pumps to eligible WIC moms who are returning to work or school if a pump is not available through their health insurance plan. Manual pumps are available as well.

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### If you missed the DPH/CT-AAP teleconferences....

Dr. Ada M. Fenick, the Connecticut WIC Program's Medical Advisor and Assistant Professor of Pediatrics at the Yale School of Medicine, presented on April 30 regarding the revised WIC food packages and on June 11 regarding breastfeeding in low income women.

You can view and print materials, and hear the audio related to these and other teleconferences in the 2009 DPH/CT-AAP series at the following website:  
<http://www.ct-aap.org/ctaap-teleconferences.html>

