

Food Package Update

MARCH 22, 2023

Food Package Changes to Food Benefits June 1, 2023.

There are two big changes happening to WIC food benefits beginning June 1, 2023.

- MN WIC is adding canned fruits and vegetables to WIC food benefits.
- WIC participants can no longer substitute 2% milk for 1% or skim milk in their food package.

Please review the information about these changes and the communications planned before June 1.

Canned fruits and vegetables will be added to the food package 6/1.

Participants will have more options to spend their WIC fruit and vegetable benefits, choices will include:

Canned Fruit:

- Any fruit or fruit mixtures packed in water or juice (**no added sugar** or artificial sweeteners).
- Any container type or size (except pouches).
- Unsweetened applesauce (with cinnamon allowed).
- Organic is allowed.
- Stevia is allowed (natural sweetener).

Do Not Buy:

- Items with added sugar.
- Items containing syrup (heavy, light).
- Items with artificial sweeteners like Sucralose (Splenda).
- Pie filling.
- Cranberry sauce.
- Pouches.

Canned Vegetables:

- Any plain variety or vegetable mixture.
- Any container type or size (except pouches).
- Tomatoes (with herbs or seasoning are allowed).
- Organic is allowed.

Do Not Buy:

- Pasta sauce, spaghetti sauce, pizza sauce or salsa/picante sauce.
- Creamed corn.
- Mixtures with legumes (like lima, black, kidney beans).
- Fermented foods (like Sauerkraut).

- anything with butter, fats, or oils.
- Items with artificial sweeteners and heavy syrup.
- Items with vinegar.
- Pouches.

Communications to Partners:

- An app notification will be sent to all participants in May notifying them of this change. Watch the Weekly Update (WU) for more information and message details.
- Vendors will be notified through the vendor newsletter, on the website and email blasts.

The following materials are being updated to include these changes:

- Shopping Guide
- Food package pictorials
- Other materials – watch the WU for resources and education tips to assist you when working with families.

HuBERT Changes

Staff will not need to make any food package changes. The new descriptions in HuBERT will be updated on May 13, 2023. These new descriptions will begin displaying as soon as they are changed in the system.

- Food Item in default food package: Fruits and Vegetables – (All WIC Allowed)
- Description on Benefit: dollars WIC-allowed Fruits and Vegetables
- Description in Mobile App: WIC-allowed Fruit/Veg(\$)

Dairy Food Benefits – 2% milk will no longer be allowed after 6/1.

During the public health emergency (PHE), a food flexibility waiver permitted participants to substitute 2% for 1% or Skim Milk listed on their food package. This flexibility was allowed in response to milk supply issues across the state. In preparation for the PHE expiration, this substitute will no longer be available for participants after 6/1/2023. Children and women with "Skim or 1% Milk" in their benefits must get the milk type indicated on their food benefits. 2% milk will continue to be a specific food package option for children < 2 years and for those receiving Food Package 3. This information will be included in the May app notification along with canned foods.

Talking points to use with participants:

Use open-ended questions to evaluate why a family is reluctant to change the type of milk. Does the parent have a personal preference for a higher fat milk? Does the parent feel the higher fat milk is better for their child?

- For parents that feel their child needs a higher fat milk for adequate calories:
 - Encourage the parents to look at a child's overall dietary intake. How frequently is the child eating? Should the child be eating more frequently?
 - Explain the calorie difference between higher and lower fat milk.

- WIC provides 1 ½ cups milk/day for children who also receive yogurt and cheese. With that in mind, a child would receive 30 additional calories/day from 2% milk (130 calories/cup) compared to 1% milk (110 calories/cup).
- For children who need additional calories, discuss simple ways that calories can be added to the child's daily intake. Just 1 tablespoon of peanut butter will make up the calorie difference! (Make sure peanut butter is age appropriate for the child.) Some nutrient-dense ideas to increase calories include provide 3 – 4 healthy snacks/day; offer snacks like yogurt, cottage cheese with fruit, cheese, and cooked eggs. Mix a teaspoon of oil or margarine into the child's food.
- For parents with a personal preference for a higher fat milk:
 - Let parents know that a child can quickly adapt to a change in the type of milk. A child often will not notice the difference if the parent doesn't bring the change to the child's attention!
 - Make sure the milk is cold when served.
 - Remind parents that most Head Start programs and schools serve 1% or skim milk. Their child may already be drinking it!
- For parents who have heard that higher fat milk is healthier:
 - Skim and 1% meet the Dietary Guidelines 2020-2025. The guidelines for 2 and over recommend fat-free and low-fat dairy products which can help decrease saturated fat and cholesterol.
 - WIC is supplemental, meant to limit nutrients of concern which tend to be excessive in the American diet like saturated fat.

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