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DATE: September 18, 2019
TO: WIC Coordinators
FROM: Nutrition & Clinic Services Unit
SUBJECT: Redemption of Infant Meats

Implementation of eWIC provides a new opportunity to examine the redemption of WIC foods by item. We queried infant meats since it is an important source of iron for breastfed infants. The report shows that **redemption of infant meats is low, around 30%**. This is an early look at eWIC data and measures only the number of jars that have been redeemed. With additional time and data, we will be able to evaluate more information such as average number of jars redeemed/household and whether age of the infant impacts redemption.

WIC can help improve iron intake of breastfed infants.

Seventy percent of all infant meats issued are never redeemed. This is a missed opportunity to add iron to infants' diets. Due to the taste and texture of pureed meats, parents may be reluctant to offer meats as a first food. What are some ways that you encourage WIC families to purchase and use WIC infant meats? Here are a few suggestions:

- Encourage parents to offer infant meats in a neutral way. As with all new foods, it may take a number of tries for the infant to become accustomed to infant meats. Give infant meats as a first complementary food so the infant becomes familiar with the taste and texture early on.
- For the younger infant (6 to 8 months), adding meat to infant cereal or a pureed fruit or vegetable may improve acceptance.
- For the older infant (9 to 12 months), the infant meat may be added to ground or chopped table meat or other protein sources to make it more moist. Some ideas:
 - Bake meatballs or meat patties made from ground meat and the infant meat. Chop the meat to the appropriate size for the infant.
 - Add infant meat to shredded, slow cooked meats.
 - Mix infant meat with cooked egg yolks.
- Older infants might like mixed dishes. Add the pureed infant meat to other foods to make a "dinner". Some examples:
 - Beef, peas and small chunks of potatoes
 - Chicken, rice and small chunks of cooked broccoli
 - Beef, squash and macaroni
- The Nutrition Education Card [Choosing Meats and Textures](#) has additional suggestions.

According to the 2016 Feeding Infants and Toddlers Study (FITS), [2016 FITS Highlights](#), more infants than ever are not getting enough iron. Eighteen percent of infants 6-12 months are

falling short on recommended iron intake. Iron deficiency can result in long-term physical, mental and developmental effects if not resolved early.

Iron recommendations for infants 6-12 months of age:

- The American Academy of Pediatrics indicates: *“Term, healthy infants have sufficient iron for at least the first 4 months of life. Human milk contains very little iron. Exclusively breastfed infants are at increasing risk of iron deficiency after 4 completed months of age.”* The article, [Diagnosis and Prevention of Iron Deficiency and Iron-Deficiency Anemia in Infants and Young Children \(0-3 Years of Age\)](#) in Pediatrics November 2010, provides Iron Supplementation recommendations for breastfed infants and preterm infants.
- In addition, the Pediatric article states, *“The iron intake between 6 and 12 months of age should be 11 mg/day. When infants are given complementary foods, red meat and vegetables with higher iron content should be introduced early.”*
- In general, about two servings per day of infant cereal (2 tablespoons/serving) or 1 to 2 ounces of meat per day will help meet iron and zinc needs as outlined in [Feeding Guidelines for Infants and Young Toddlers: A Responsive Parenting Approach](#).
- WIC provides infant meat in the food package of fully breastfed infants as a ready source of iron and zinc.