

Module A:

Prescribing Food Instruments

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OVERVIEW

Introduction

This module will help staff understand how WIC prescribes Food Instruments (FIs).

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, the Trainee will be able to complete the following.

- Identify WIC authorized foods
 - Describe how foods are selected to be included on the WIC food list
 - Identify the information printed on FIs
 - List the foods included in the food packages for the participant categories
 - Explain how changes in participant status affect food package content
 - Describe procedure for prescribing substitute and tailored food packages
 - Explain what documents are needed in order to issue to participants, proxies, and alternates
 - Explain how FIs are issued when a participant is disqualified
 - Identify what food package to prescribe for a given participant
 - Describe the required topics covered in the WIC new participant orientation: *Welcome to WIC*
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FOOD INSTRUMENTS

Definition

A Food Instrument is a special check given at WIC used to buy WIC authorized foods at any WIC authorized vendor.

FIs are sometimes called the following.

- “Checks”
 - “Vouchers”
 - “Coupons”
-

Description

FIs contain all of the following information.

- A serial number
 - The participant’s individual WIC MIS ID number
 - The family’s name
 - First and last days to use
 - WIC authorized vendor
 - Type of WIC authorized foods
 - Amount of food
 - A participant signature line
 - WIC logo
-

Learning Activity 1

To learn more about *Food Instruments*, you may want to try **Learning Activity 1** found at the end of this module.

WIC AUTHORIZED FOODS

Definition

WIC authorized foods are the foods participants may buy with their WIC FIs. WIC staff sometimes call these “WIC allowed foods”. Authorized foods are specific to each individual category.

List

WIC authorized food categories include:

- Milk/ lactose-free milk (includes powder and evaporated)
- Cheese
- Eggs
- Soy milk and tofu
- Whole grains
- Breakfast cereal
- Peanut butter
- Dry beans, peas, or lentils
- Canned mature beans
- Canned fish
- Infant fruits and vegetables (jar)
- Infant meats (jar)
- Infant formula
- Infant cereal
- Juice (Concentrate and bottle)
- Fruits and vegetables (fresh, canned, and/or frozen)
- Yogurt

All WIC authorized foods can be found in the WIC Authorized Food List and Shopping Guide.

SELECTION OF WIC FOODS

Who Chooses the WIC Foods?

The **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** sets rules for the kinds of foods the WIC Program can offer. These foods contain the nutrients most often missing in the diets of low-income women, infants, and children.

The **California WIC Program** uses these rules to decide on which specific foods participants can buy with FIs in California.

How Are WIC Foods Chosen?

WIC chooses foods based on the following criteria.

- Nutrient composition
 - Availability
 - Acceptability
 - Appropriateness
 - Package size
 - Cost
 - Variety
 - Cultural food preferences
-

Nutrient Composition

The food must meet the USDA WIC regulations and the specific California WIC Program's requirements for how much of each nutrient the food contains.

Availability

The food must be available statewide.

For example, if a juice is only available in Fresno it could NOT be a WIC allowed food for California.

Acceptability

The food must be acceptable to WIC participants.

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SELECTION OF WIC FOODS *(continued)*

Appropriateness	The food should be appropriate for the participant's category. For example, orange juice would NOT be appropriate for a four-month old infant and whole milk would NOT be appropriate for a three year old.
Package Size	WIC chooses package sizes so participants can buy the full quantity or close to the full quantity of food allowed. Package sizes are also selected to get the most for the cost of food.
Cost	The food should be of high quality but as economical as possible.
Variety	There should be adequate variety in a food type. For example, in cereals there should be variety in the grain types (whole grain or refined), texture (flake, puff or nugget), or grain source (corn, rice, oat, wheat, etc.)
Cultural food Preference	The foods should be acceptable to a wide variety of cultural preferences of the WIC population.
Learning Activity 2	To learn more about <i>WIC Authorized Foods Shopping Experience</i> , you may want to try Learning Activity 2 found at the end of this module.

FOOD PACKAGE CONTENTS

Definition

A WIC food package is a combination of WIC authorized foods allowed for a given participant.

Prescriptions

Food packages are prescribed based on the participant's:

- Category
 - Age
 - Nutritional need (something affecting the participant's health or nutrition status)
-

Descriptions

There are over 100 different WIC food packages. Refer to the WIC Works website for these packages by category. This listing gives the food package name and a basic description of the foods contained in each food package.

Prescribing Substitute and Tailored Food Packages

Although you will most often prescribe one of the standard food packages, sometimes a participant will have specific needs/requests.

- Not use all the foods prescribed
- Need other foods in place of those in the standard food package
- Need a food package not requiring refrigeration
- Need a food package designed for people with special dietary needs

When this happens, you will offer a substitute or therapeutic food package to meet the needs of the participant.

Remember:

- Checks with a combination of foods cannot have single food items tailored out
 - Therapeutic food packages require a physician's prescription
 - Any food package tailoring should be participant directed
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Learning Activity 3 & 4

To practice and learn more about *Food Packages, Substituting & Tailoring Food Packages*, you may want to try **Learning Activity 3 & Learning Activity 4** found at the end of this module.

DOCUMENTS FOR PARTICIPANTS, ALTERNATES & PROXIES

Documents

There are several documents either you or the participant will need before you can issue FIs. These are listed below.

- The WIC Identification Folder (WIF)
- Written notes for proxies
- Photo ID's for alternates or proxies

WIC Identification Folder

The WIC Identification Folder, also called WIF, is the identification card given to the adult member enrolling herself or a family member in WIC.

A participant must show the WIF:

- at the WIC site to get her/his FIs
- at the store to buy WIC foods

Note from Proxy

To pick up FIs at the WIC site a proxy must have a note from the participant. The note must include:

- a statement giving the proxy permission to pick up the FIs
 - the date
 - the signature of the participant
-

IDENTIFYING FOOD INSTRUMENT RECIPIENTS

Who is picking up the food Instruments?

Before FIs are issued, the person who will be receiving the checks must be clearly identified. There are four options for recipients.

- Participants
- Parent or guardian
- Alternates
- Proxies

Alternates/Proxies

Sometimes a participant will not be able to come to her/his WIC appointment. S/he may not be able to go to an appointment because they:

- Are sick
- Have a conflicting work schedule
- Are caring for a sick family member
- Do not have transportation

Alternates

An alternate is someone the participant has chosen to pick up and use the FIs when the participant cannot.

The alternate's name is in WIC MIS in the field for "Alternate". The alternate's name and signature are also on the WIC Identification Folder (WIF).

There is space in WIC MIS and on the WIF for at least two alternates. The local agency or the participant should instruct the alternate on the correct way to use FIs.

Alternate Parent or Guardian

Parents and guardians have all the same rights and responsibilities as the primary contact/ parent. Local agency can issue new WIF with a photo ID. (cannot with alternates or proxies)

Proxies

A proxy is someone the participant chooses to pick up the FIs. The proxy's name is NOT on the WIF.

The proxy's name is documented in the "Proxy" field in WIC MIS, but only for a specific appointment.

A proxy **cannot** use the FIs at the grocery store.

Differences Between Alternates & Proxies

There are some differences between alternates and proxies. These are listed in the chart on the next page.

IDENTIFYING FOOD INSTRUMENT RECIPIENTS *(continued)***Differences between Alternates & Proxies**

ITEM	PRIMARY CONTACT/ PARENT	PARENT OR GUARDIAN	ALTERNATE	PROXY
Name is located in WIC MIS	Y	Y	Y	N
Can use WIF as ID	Y	Y	N	N
Signs WIF	Y	Y	Y	N
Must show picture ID at the WIC office	N	N	Y	Y
Must bring a note signed & dated by participant giving permission to receive FIs	N	N	N	Y
Receives nutrition education for the participant	Y	Y	Y	N
Receives vouchers at the WIC office	Y	Y	Y	Y
Use vouchers at the store	Y	Y	Y	N
Can receive a new WIF	Y	Y	N	N

Class attendance is highly encouraged. Check to see what your agency's policy is regarding class attendance.

DISQUALIFICATION

Definition

Disqualification is removing a certified participant or family from the WIC Program if/when they do not meet eligibility criteria for continued participation.

For more information on Disqualification, see Task 2, Module B.

FIs Issued

When a participant is disqualified from WIC she/he must be given a 15 day notice. A final month of FIs may be issued for the remainder of the certification period depending on the effective date of disqualification and the last day to use the FIs.

See [WPM 280-10](#) [WPM 280-20](#) [WPM 280-30](#) for issuance guidance during disqualification.

PROGRESS CHECK

1. Match the following terms (words) to their definitions.

<u>TERM/WORDS</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
_____ WIC authorized food	(A) Foods participants may buy with FIs
_____ Food package	(B) WIC “check” or “voucher”
_____ WIC Identification Folder	(C) A combination of WIC authorized foods given to a participant
_____ Food Instrument	(D) Identification card given to the adult member enrolling herself or a family member in WIC.

2. Put a check (✓) next to the WIC authorized foods.

_____ Milk	_____ Eggs
_____ Yogurt	_____ Tofu
_____ Infant cereal	_____ Cheese
_____ Carrots	_____ Juice
_____ Corn tortillas	_____ Cereal
_____ Peanut butter	_____ Wheat bread
_____ Raisins	_____ Oranges
_____ Tuna	_____ Jam

3. WIC chooses foods based on: (Check (✓) all that apply)

_____ Nutrient composition	_____ Ready to use
_____ Availability	_____ Cost
_____ Digestibility	_____ Package size
_____ Acceptability	_____ Variety
_____ Appropriateness	

PROGRESS CHECK *(continued)*

4. For the following statements, indicate “yes” or “no” to those applicable for a participant, alternate, or proxy.

ITEM	PRIMARY CONTACT/ PARENT	ALTERNATE PARENT	ALTERNATE	PROXY
Name is located in WIC MIS				
Can use WIF as ID				
Signs WIF				
Must show picture ID at the WIC office				
Must bring a note signed & dated by participant giving permission to receive FIs				
Receives nutrition education for the participant				
Can receive vouchers at the WIC office				
Uses vouchers at the store				
Can receive a new WIF				

LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following activities are included and are recommended for interactive learning:

- **Learning Activity 1:** FIs
- **Learning Activity 2:** WIC Authorized Foods
- **Learning Activity 3:** Food Packages
- **Learning Activity 4:** Special Foods & Tailored Food Packages

ACTIVITY 1: FOOD INSTRUMENTS

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity the Trainee will be able to identify the parts of a Food Instrument (FI).

Instructions

1. Ask your mentor or supervisor for a sample WIC FI. (Your agency may have a laminated version of a food instrument available for training purposes.)
 2. Looking at the sample FI locate the following.
 - Individual ID number
 - Family name
 - First day to use
 - Last day to use
 - Serial number
 - WIC allowed foods
 - WIC authorized vendor
 - Signature line
 - WIC logo
 3. Use the form on the next page. Put a check mark next to each item as you find it on the sample FI and also write in the information for each item.
 4. Review with your mentor or supervisor if you have any questions.
-

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ACTIVITY 1: FOOD INSTRUMENTS

Sample FI

Check (√)	Item	Information
	Individual ID Number	
	Family Name	
	First Day to Use	
	Last Day to Use	
	Serial Number	
	Quantity of WIC Allowed Foods	
	WIC Authorized Vendor	
	Purchase Price	
	Signature Line	
	WIC Logo	

ACTIVITY 2: WIC AUTHORIZED FOODS SHOPPING EXPERIENCE**Learning Objectives**

After completing this activity the Trainee will be able to identify the WIC authorized foods.

Background

The *California WIC Shopping Guide* contains all of the WIC authorized foods. You will need to be familiar with the most current guide of WIC authorized foods.

Instructions

1. Ask your mentor or supervisor for a copy of the:
 - *California WIC Shopping Guide*
 2. Take the guide with you when you go to the grocery store.
 3. Look for the WIC authorized foods.
 4. Write down each food, its size, and its price in the chart on the next page.
 5. Make sure to look for the allowed container sizes and quantities. (The grocery store you go to may NOT have all the allowed sizes.)
 6. Discuss your experience with your mentor or supervisor. Was it easy to find all the foods?
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ACTIVITY 3: FOOD PACKAGES

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity the Trainee will be able to identify food packages for nine case studies.

Background

There are over 100 WIC food packages. Each food package contains different combinations and/or quantities of foods.

The food package a participant gets depends on:

- category
- age
- nutritional need

Some special food packages must be prescribed by a health care provider and approved by the WIC nutritionist.

Instructions

1. Read each of the case studies on the following pages.
 2. Referring to the packages on the WIC Works website, identify the correct food package for each case study.
 3. For each case study, list the foods in their food package.
 4. If you need help speak to your supervisor or mentor.
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ACTIVITY 3: FOOD PACKAGES

CASE STUDY 1:

Mai Yang is 22 years old and expecting her first baby in four months.

Which food package & foods should Mai be offered?

CASE STUDY 2:

Lupe Hernandez is a two-month-old, formula fed infant. Her mother comes back to the WIC clinic with a note from her doctor stating Lupe is allergic to milk and requesting soy formula.

Which food package & foods should Lupe receive?

ACTIVITY 3: FOOD PACKAGES**CASE STUDY 4:**

Jose is four months old. He is being breastfed by his mother Maria. She does not use any formula. She tells you she is living in a hotel right now.

Which food package & foods should Jose receive?

What should Maria receive?

CASE STUDY 5:

Ana Petrovich turns one year old later this month. Her mother says she is drinking whole milk with no problems.

Which food package & foods should Ana receive?

CASE STUDY 6:

Bui Nguyen is seven months old. Bui's mother Tang, breastfeeds Bui and also gives him infant formula once a day.

Which food package should Bui receive?

What should Tang receive?

ACTIVITY 3: FOOD PACKAGES**CASE STUDY 7:**

Sylvia is two and half years old. A note from her doctor says Sylvia needs soy milk.

Which food package & foods should Sylvia receive?

CASE STUDY 8:

Emily Chang has a daughter Grace who turned five months old this month. Emily does not breastfeed Grace at all. Grace is doing fine on formula with iron but is lactose intolerant.

Which food packages & foods should Emily receive?

What should Grace receive?

CASE STUDY 9:

Desiree Parker is an underweight two and a half-year-old girl, drinking cow's milk. Her mother has brought in a doctor's note stating she wants whole milk.

Which food package & foods should Desiree receive?

ACTIVITY 4: SUBSTITUTE & TAILORED FOOD PACKAGES

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity the Trainee will be able to identify how to select another food package to meet the special needs of participants

Instructions

1. Read each of the case studies on the following pages.
 2. Referring to the WIC Works website, identify the correct food package to meet the special needs for each case study.
 3. If you need help speak to your supervisor or mentor.
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ACTIVITY 4: SUBSTITUTE & TAILORED FOOD PACKAGES

CASE STUDY 1:

Belinda Jones is pregnant. She tells you she is homeless.

Which food package & foods should Belinda receive?

CASE STUDY 2:

Andrew Nguyen is two years old. His mother has a written medical note stating Andrew is lactose intolerant.

Which food package should Andrew receive?

ACTIVITY 4: SUBSTITUTE & TAILORED FOOD PACKAGES**CASE STUDY 3:**

Sally Chun is pregnant. She indicates she would like soy milk.

Which food package & foods should Sally receive?

CASE STUDY 4

Jesus Jimenez is three months old. His mother has stopped breastfeeding. She brings in a prescription from his doctor for a specific formula since Jesus is lactose intolerant.

Which food package should Jesus receive?

CASE STUDY 5:

Keisha Johnson came to her WIC appointment in August and told you she stopped breastfeeding her eight-month-old son Kevin in July. He takes formula, solid foods and does not want cereal.

Which food package & foods should Kevin receive in August, what foods would you tailor?

What should Keisha receive in August?

PROGRESS CHECK ANSWERS

1. Match the following terms (words) to their definitions.

<u>TERM/WORDS</u>	<u>DEFINITION</u>
<u>A</u> WIC authorized food	(A) Foods participants may buy with FIs
<u>C</u> Food package	(B) WIC “check” or “voucher”
<u>D</u> WIC Identification Folder	(C) A combination of WIC authorized foods given to a participant
<u>B</u> Food Instrument	(D) Identification card given to the adult member enrolling herself or a family member in WIC.

2. Put a check (✓) next to the WIC authorized foods.

<u>✓</u> Milk	<u>✓</u> Eggs
<u>✓</u> Yogurt	<u>✓</u> Tofu
<u>✓</u> Infant cereal	<u>✓</u> Cheese
<u>✓</u> Carrots	<u>✓</u> Juice
<u>✓</u> Corn tortillas	<u>✓</u> Cereal
<u>✓</u> Peanut butter	<u>✓</u> Wheat bread (Whole grain)
<u>✓</u> Raisins	<u>✓</u> Oranges
<u>✓</u> Tuna	<u> </u> Jam

3. WIC chooses foods based on: (Check (✓) all that apply)

<u>✓</u> Nutrient composition	<u> </u> Ready to use
<u>✓</u> Availability	<u>✓</u> Cost
<u> </u> Digestibility	<u>✓</u> Package size
<u>✓</u> Acceptability	<u>✓</u> Variety
<u>✓</u> Appropriateness	

PROGRESS CHECK ANSWERS *(continued)*

5. For the following statements, indicate “yes” or “no” to those applicable for a participant, alternate, or proxy.

ITEM	PRIMARY CONTACT/ PARENT	ALTERNATE PARENT	ALTERNATE	PROXY
Name is located in WIC MIS	Yes Family Name	Yes Source is “P” on alternate line	Yes Use F4 to document alternate	No Must be typed in each time on Proxy line
Can use WIF as ID	Yes	Yes	No	No
Signs WIF	Yes (when receiving a new WIF)	Yes (when receiving a new WIF)	Yes	No
Must show picture ID at the WIC office	No	No	Yes	Yes
Must bring a note signed & dated by participant giving permission to receive FI	No	No	No	Yes (but does not sign the WIF)
Receives nutrition education for the participant	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Can receive vouchers at the WIC office	Yes	Yes	Yes (with ID)	Yes (with ID)
Uses vouchers at the store	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Can receive a new WIF	Yes	Yes	No	No