

# **The New WIC Food Packages**

## **Massachusetts WIC Approved Foods**



# Issuing New Food Packages in the WIC System

## Key lessons for the upcoming food pack transition in the Legacy system:

- Only new food packages will be issued from October 1st and beyond.
- Pregnant women should only be issued checks for 2 weeks beyond their expected due date.
- Breastfeeding mothers and infants who certify before the infant's one month birthday should only receive checks up to the infant's one month birth date.
- Base dates should be changed to the infant's "day" of date of birth.
- All staff should know how to change base dates.
- Staff should know how changing the base dates affects the participants' checks.
- All staff should understand manual proration.

# Only New Foods will be Issued from October 1st and Beyond

- The ability to assign new food packages will **not** be available until October 1, 2009. Staff will not be able to assign the new food package before October 1, 2009
- Any participant with a September base date who missed their September follow-up appointment and comes in October for their appointment will be issued the new food package. The nutritionist will go in and reassign the new food package starting with the calendar month September and forward. Participants with an old food package who require a valid package change after **October 1st** will have their checks voided as “U” used or “H” in hand and the new food package checks will be reissued and assessed for manual proration based on the number of days the participant has left to use the checks.
- Participants who request a food package change after **October 1st** simply because they want to receive new foods (instead of old foods), must return all checks for every member of the household for every calendar month being reissued.

# Check Replacement Policies After October 1st.

- **The Check Replacement Policy** has NOT changed.
- Any approved check replacement after October 1st will be for the new food packages.
- Checks for **non-contract standard formula** (Enfamil Lipil) can NOT be issued after **October 1st** except in the case of homelessness or religious dietary restriction. (see Module 5)
- Checks for whole milk for participants over the age of two or women can **NOT** be issued after **October 1st** except in the case of participants who have a documented medical condition that requires the issuance of a high calorie special medical food such as Pediasure. (**see Module 1 and 5** )

# **Pregnant women should only be issued checks for 2 weeks beyond their due date.**

- It is recommended that staff print only two weeks of checks beyond the woman's expected due date to encourage a quicker return to WIC so mom will get more timely breastfeeding support and potentially more foods.
- This will also help with breastfeeding success.
- Printing more than two weeks beyond the EDD for mom may prohibit the issuance of the appropriate food package when mom comes to the WIC office after the birth of her baby.

## **Breastfeeding mothers and infants should only receive one month of checks after certification.**

- Staff should encourage moms to get re-certified as soon as possible after birth. This will help to align check issuance in accordance to the new age-based food packages.
- Follow-up contact education for fully breastfeeding mothers and infants should be scheduled close to the infant's one month birth date.
- Example: Today is October 13<sup>th</sup>. A breastfeeding mom comes in to be certified with her new baby born on October 5<sup>rd</sup>. Mom and baby would receive checks to the infant's one month birthday which is November 5<sup>th</sup>.

## **Breastfeeding Mother's and Infants who certify between 2 and 3 weeks of age.**

- Change the base date to the “day” of the infant’s date of birth.
- Do proper assessment to evaluate the needs of both the the mother and infant.
- Print checks through the infant’s 2<sup>nd</sup> birth month.
- Example: Today is October 26<sup>st</sup>. A breastfeeding mom comes in to be certified with her new infant born on October 5<sup>rd</sup>. Mom and infant would receive checks to the infant’s second month birthday which is December 5<sup>th</sup>.

# Assessments done in the first few months of life

- Staff need to rely on professional judgment.
- Consider the status of breastfeeding, mother's plan to return to work/school and whether mom/infant would benefit from more frequent follow up when deciding whether to issue checks through the infant's first or second month birthday. Also consider whether or not mom absolutely requires supplemental formula in the second month of birth.
- Remember, the intent of the rule is to protect a mother's milk supply, encourage exclusive breastfeeding and provide more support for the breastfeeding mother in our care.
- Opt for more frequent follow-up over questionable issuance of supplemental formula when possible.

# Legacy Message Alerts on Risk Assessment Screen

- When an infant turns 5 months old the following pop up message appears on the risk assessment screen: “Warning - infant turns 5 months old this month”, Staff need to ignore this message as it is no longer valid. Solid foods for infants will now be assigned at 6 months of age; therefore, nutrition staff must enter the appropriate package for a 5 month old infant and delay assignment of cereal and baby foods until 6 months of age.
- When the message “Infant turns 1 year old this month. Either infant’s package or child’s package allowed” appears on the risk screen, nutrition staff need to ignore this message and continue to assign the infant package.

# Manual Proration due to Medical Contraindication

- If a “Request for Special Medical Foods and Formula Form” is brought in by a participant and the form indicates some foods are restricted, Nutrition staff need to review the checks printed and identify which check(s) should not be given due to the restriction. Once the check(s) is identified, the following needs to happen:
  - manually void as in hand the check that contains the restricted food.
  - For example, if a participants check lists eggs, milk, beans, and the participant is allergic to eggs and milk protein then the entire check would be manually removed from the food package.

## Manual Proration due to Medical Contraindication Continued

- In some cases, when the allowed foods far out number the restricted food(s) on a check, the nutrition staff should use professional judgment in determining whether or not to give the participant the check.

Example: If the participant's check lists eggs, milk, juice, cereal and beans and the participant is allergic to eggs, nutrition staff can make a nutrition assessment, to determine if the participant would benefit more from receiving the allowed foods on the check as opposed to taking the check away because of the one restricted item.

- Nutrition education and counseling must be provided to the participant about not purchasing restricted foods.



# Base dates should be changed to the infant's "day" of date of birth

- The new foods rules are based on the specific date and age of the infant. It is important to make sure all infants base dates are changed to the infant's "day" of date of birth.

Example: Today is 10/13/2009 and the infant's DOB is 10/05/2009. Mom and infant are certified today, infant's base date will be the 13<sup>th</sup>. Change the next base date to the infant's "day" of date of birth (11/05/2009) which is the infant's one month birthday. For BF infants, print one month; for fully formula fed infants, print according to assessment.

- This will better meet the needs of the growing infant through the first year of life.

## **All staff should know how to change the next base date and understand how this affects the dates on the participants checks.**

- Base date is the **“Not Good Before Date”**.
- Changing the next base date is not hard once you’ve learned the process.
- Changing the next base date on checks will impact age related food package assignment.
- We suggest each local program director sit down and do an informal training with all staff. Refer to the POM “check system” section on base dates for complete instructions.
- For further clarification, please call Sue Allen @ TLC.

# Proration

- Proration policy has not changed. The participants' food packages are prorated according to how much time participants have left to use the checks.
- Changing the next base date will automatically prorate the first set of checks being issued.
- Food packages can now have up to nine checks. Remember to use the NEW proration table if you are manually prorating checks. When prorating manually always take away checks from the end of the food package.
- Refer to the POM “check system” section for more information.

If further assistance is needed, please contact Sue Allen @ TLC.

# Proration Table

	DAYS UNTIL NEXT BASE DATE			
NUMBER OF CHECKS IN PACKAGE	22-31	15-21	8-14	1-7
1	No proration	No proration	No proration	No proration
2	No proration	No proration	1 check	1 check
3	No proration	No proration	2 checks	1 check
4	No proration	3 checks	2 checks	1 check
5	No proration	4 checks	3 checks	2 checks
6	No proration	4 checks	3 checks	2 checks
7	No proration	5 checks	4 checks	2 checks
8	No proration	6 checks	4 checks	2 checks
9	No proration	7 checks	5 checks	3 checks