

WIC: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children



1. What is WIC?

WIC provides nutritious foods, nutrition counseling, and referrals to health and other social services to participants at no charge.

2. Who is eligible?

Pregnant or postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5 are eligible. They must meet income guidelines, a State residency requirement, and be individually determined to be at “nutrition risk” by a health professional. A person who participates or has family members who participate in certain other benefit programs, such as the Food Stamp Program, Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, automatically meets the income eligibility requirement.

3. What is “nutrition risk?”

Two major types of nutrition risk are recognized for WIC eligibility:

- Medically-based risks (designated as “high priority”) such as anemia, underweight, maternal age, history of pregnancy complications, or poor pregnancy outcomes.
- Diet-based risks, such as an inadequate diet.

Nutrition risk is determined by a health professional such as a physician, nutritionist, or nurse, and is based on Federal guidelines. This health screening is free to program applicants.

4. What food benefits do WIC participants receive?

WIC participants receive checks or vouchers to purchase specific foods each month that are designed to supplement their diets. WIC foods include items such as iron-fortified infant formula and infant cereal, iron-fortified adult cereal, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried beans/peas, tuna fish and carrots. Special therapeutic infant formulas and medical foods are provided when prescribed by a physician for a specified medical condition.

5. Who gets first priority for participation?

WIC cannot serve all eligible people, so a system of priorities has been established for filling program openings. Once a local WIC agency has reached its maximum caseload, vacancies are filled in the order of the following priority levels:

- Pregnant women, breastfeeding women, and infants determined to be at nutrition risk because of a nutrition-related medical condition.
- Infants up to 6 months of age whose mothers participated in WIC or could have participated and had a serious medical problem.
- Children at nutrition risk because of a nutrition-related medical problem.
- Pregnant or breastfeeding women and infants at nutrition risk because of an inadequate dietary pattern.
- Children at nutrition risk because of an inadequate dietary pattern.
- Non-breastfeeding, postpartum women with any nutrition risk.
- Individuals at nutrition risk only because they are homeless or migrants, and current participants who, without WIC foods, could continue to have medical and/or dietary problems.

For more information contact the **New Jersey WIC Program at (609) 292-9560**. Information on the New Jersey WIC Program is available on the internet at <http://www.state.nj.us/health/fhs/wic/index.shtml>
Information on all FNS programs is available at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/>.