



THE COUNTY OF CHESTER



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Women, Infants and Children Program (WIC) Offers New Food Options for Healthier Families

WEST CHESTER – Last week, the Chester County Health Department, along with the PA Department of Health's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program, launched **WIC & YOU: Making Healthy Choices Together**. The revised nutrition program provides current and expectant mothers with expanded healthy food options and guidelines to provide balanced meals to help their children learn and grow.

“As the years go by, the needs of our participants in the WIC program change.” said Margaret Rivello, Director, Chester County Health Department. “We need to change with them in order to meet the most up-to-date dietary guidelines. Our goal is to provide not only food, but information as well, so participants can make the best choices to meet their family's nutrition needs.”

Starting in October, WIC participants can use their vouchers to purchase whole grains (whole wheat bread/rolls, brown rice, oats or soft tortillas), soy milk and tofu, fresh fruits and vegetables, jarred baby foods, canned beans, and pink salmon or sardines, in addition to the foods WIC currently provides.

“The economy has impacted many families across Pennsylvania,” says Rivello. “Currently, over 5,000 women, infants, and children in our county receive WIC benefits. Good nutrition should be available to everyone. WIC makes that possible.”

Healthy food choices can impact the health of children. According to a report published in March 2009 by Children's HealthWatch – *Feeding our Future: Growing Up Healthy With WIC*, the WIC program has proven to decrease the rate of low birth weight babies by 44 percent and has reduced the number of children with anemia by 12 per cent.

WIC is a federally funded program that provides wholesome foods, nutrition education and services to eligible pregnant women, postpartum and breastfeeding women, infants and children up to age five. The program also serves eligible dads, grandparents, foster parents and legal guardians of children up to age five. They must meet income guidelines, a state residency requirement, and be individually determined to be at “nutrition risk” by a health professional. To be eligible on the basis of income, family income must fall at or below 185% of the US Poverty Income Guidelines (currently \$40,793 for a family of four).

To find out more about WIC, visit www.chesco.org/wic or call 610 344-6240.

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WIC is a program of the Pennsylvania Department of Health with funds from the United States Department of Agriculture.
WIC is an equal opportunity provider.

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