

Breastfeeding Promotion and Support Cheat Sheet

*This document is not meant to replace policy or procedure. It is meant to summarize the key pieces of information to remember when promoting and supporting breastfeeding to WIC families.

- ✓ Promoting and supporting breastfeeding is the responsibility of all WIC staff. Support and encouragement should start from the moment a participant contacts the WIC Program or enters the clinic, and continue throughout their appointment with each individual they encounter.
- ✓ Breastfeeding should be considered the gold standard when it comes to infant feeding and formula should be provided only as needed or requested after discussion of breastfeeding goals and intentions.
 - There are a very limited number of conditions or situations that would prevent a mother and her infant from being able to breastfeed. See the Breastfeeding Promotion and Support Policy for a description of these conditions.
- ✓ Breastfeeding intentions should be a part of the conversation during the certification appointment for every pregnant participant. The goals of this appointment include the following:
 - Determine the mother's breastfeeding intentions.
 - Address concerns, offer solutions and explore options.
 - Describe the ways WIC supports breastfeeding.
- ✓ To ensure a mother's milk supply is fully established and to support exclusive breastfeeding, infant formula will not be routinely offered or provided to breastfed infants before they reach one month of age.
 - If a breastfeeding mother requests formula for her infant, an assessment will be done that includes:
 - Completing the breastfeeding questions in the WIC data system.
 - Determining why formula is being requested.
 - Providing information about the impact of formula on breastfeeding.
 - Suggesting strategies for continued breastfeeding to address the stated concerns and to meet the mother's goal.
 - If there is no medical indication for supplementation try the following:
 - Describe alternatives to formula such as expressing breast milk by hand or with a pump.
 - Explain how the mother's food package depends on her infant's food package; point out the differences in quantity and kinds of foods.
 - Build the mother's confidence in her ability to breastfeed and provide education about how to increase milk supply.
 - If the mother insists that she receive formula, the WIC health professionals should:

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- Encourage continued breastfeeding,
 - Provide additional breastfeeding education and support as needed,
 - Work with the mother to determine the minimum amount of formula needed to protect breastfeeding and meet the infant's needs
 - Document in the care plan how the amount of formula issued was determined,
 - Explain how the infant's food package affects the package the mother will receive and create the appropriate food package,
 - Encourage powder formula because it can be mixed and fed as needed,
 - Provide education about safe use of infant formula,
 - Encourage mothers to call if they decide they no longer need as much formula or if they resume full breastfeeding (this will affect the mother's food package), and
 - Determine how many months of FIs to issue and when to schedule a return appointment.
- ✓ If a WIC participant is having issues or concerns with breastfeeding, a process should be in place for referring her for the proper support.
- Each local WIC agency has Breastfeeding Peer Counselors that can assist mothers with common breastfeeding concerns. WIC participants should be encouraged to receive support from Breastfeeding Peer Counselors during pregnancy and postpartum.
 - Concerns beyond the scope of a Breastfeeding Peer Counselor should be referred to the local agency Designated Breastfeeding Expert, or DBE, for more in-depth assessment and assistance in line with the level 4 content of the USDA WIC Breastfeeding Curriculum content.
 - Local WIC agencies should establish relationships with local breastfeeding support partners. IBCLCs or the mother's physician should be consulted for complex situations out of the scope of a nurse, dietitian, nutrition educator or CPA staff with extended breastfeeding education and expertise.
- ✓ The WIC Program has access to supply breastfeeding families with breastfeeding aids as appropriate, including breast pumps or other accessories.
- Breastfeeding aids should be provided in conjunction with appropriate counseling, education, and follow-up.
 - Breast pumps will be authorized and issued by competent professional authorities (CPAs) or IBCLCs.
 - Breast pumps and accessories may be issued to breastfeeding women up to one year postpartum. (They may NOT be issued to pregnant participants.)
 - When issuing a breast pump to a participant:
 - Be sure they don't already have access to or own a breast pump.
 - Ensure the participant is familiar with how to assemble and use the equipment being issued.

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- Provide information on safe practices for storing and handling expressed breast milk.
- Document the issuance of the pump in the WIC data system on the Breastfeeding Equipment panel.
- Schedule an appointment to follow up regarding concerns or questions.