Food Package Nutrition Tailoring

Policy

USDA Federal Regulations: (c) Nutrition tailoring. The full maximum monthly allowances of all supplemental foods in all food packages must be made available to participants if medically or nutritionally warranted. Reductions in these amounts cannot be made for cost-savings, administrative convenience, caseload management, or to control vendor abuse. Reductions in these amounts cannot be made for categories, groups or subgroups of WIC participants. The provision of less than the maximum monthly allowances of supplemental foods to an individual WIC participant in all food packages is appropriate only when:

(1) Medically or nutritionally warranted (e.g., to eliminate a food due to a food allergy);
(2) A participant refuses or cannot use the maximum monthly allowances; or
(3) The quantities necessary to supplement another programs' contribution to fill a medical prescription would be less than the maximum monthly allowances.

(e) Food packages. There are seven food packages available under the Program that may be provided to participants. The authorized supplemental foods must be prescribed from food packages according to the category and nutritional needs of the participants. Breastfeeding assessment and the mother's plans for breastfeeding serve as the basis for determining food package issuance for all breastfeeding women. The intent of the WIC Program is that all breastfeeding women be supported to exclusively breastfeed their infants and to choose the fully breastfeeding food package without infant formula. Breastfeeding mothers whose infants receive formula from WIC are to be supported to breastfeed to the maximum extent possible with minimal supplementation with infant formula. Formula amounts issued to breastfed infants are to be tailored to meet but not exceed the infant's nutritional needs.

Authority

7 CFR Part 246.10(c)(1-3)
7 CFR Part 246.10(e)

Procedures

The model food packages in the data system provide the regulatory maximum quantities.

- The amount of formula for partially breastfed infants and the amount of supplemental foods for children and women with qualifying conditions must be individually tailored based on the medical documentation and the participant's needs.
- Infant formula amounts for breastfed infants, even those in the fully-formula fed category will be individually tailored to the amounts that meet their nutritional needs.
- When tailoring a food from a model food package in Focus, the food row being tailored

must first be deleted and then a new row must be added with the desired food**.**

In joint custody situations where both households have been determined to be WIC-eligible, the full nutrition benefit should still be provided. However, it must be divided between the two households based on the amount of time the child spends in each household during a typical month.

The same full nutrition benefits apply but food types and forms in a food packages may be tailored to:

- Accommodate participant preferences and eating patterns (e.g. food allergies).
- Accommodate household and general living conditions (e.g. food storage, equipment for food preparation, unsafe water, homeless and transient status).

Issuance of soy-based beverage and tofu must be based on an individual nutrition assessment by a CPA and consultation with the participant's health care provider if necessary. Due to this reason, participants receiving soy-based beverage and tofu must have these products specifically listed on their food benefits. Also, due to how the data system works, participants receiving other forms of milk (evaporated, goat, sweet acidophilus, nonfat dry) must have these products specifically listed on their food benefits. Only the types and forms of milk listed on the participant's food benefits can be purchased.

Type of Milk	**Substitution Rate**
Nonfat dry milk powder	1-25.6 oz. box = 8 qt. milk
Evaporated milk	4-12 oz. cans = 3 qt. milk
Goat milk powder	12 oz. = 3 qt. milk
Lactose free milk	1 qt. = 1 qt. milk
Sweet acidophilus milk	1 qt. = 1 qt. milk
Cheese	1 qt. = 1 qt. milk
Tofu	1 qt. = 1 qt. milk
Soy beverage	1 qt. = 1 qt. milk
Yogurt	1 qt. = 1 qt. milk

The options for food packages that can provide both dried beans and peanut butter include the following:

- 1 lb. dried beans + 18 oz. peanut butter

- 2 lb. dried beans
- 36 oz. peanut butter

When the quantity of food has been reduced below the full nutrition benefit, the CPA must:

- Advise the participant that the food package provides less than the regulatory maximum, and
- Offer the participant the option to obtain the full food package benefit (i.e., increase the quantity of food or provide allowable food substitutions).

If a participant receives less than the full nutrition benefit, there are two ways to document this depending on whether the reduction was due to a medical/ nutritional requirement or participant preference.

- If the participant self-reports a medical and/or nutritional reason for tailoring or making changes to a food package below the full nutrition benefit, this must be documented by marking the "Self-Reported" checkbox on the Food Package panel and documenting additional information in the "Details" text box. If the text box does not provide enough space for documentation, add the additional information in the comments box on the Food Package panel.
- If the participant declines the full food package due to participant preference, then this reason must be documented in the comments box on the Food Package panel instead of using the "Self-Reported" checkbox.

Best Practices

Reasons local agency staff will take into consideration that may result in a participant refusing the full food package or not being able to use all of it include but are not limited to the following:

- Typical food intake patterns
- Food aversions
- Household production of WIC foods
- Religious reasons prohibiting intake of WIC foods
- Refusing the form of juice (i.e., frozen vs. single strength) in the model food package for that participant type.

Examples of nutrition tailoring to accommodate participant preferences include:

- Issuing benefits for a different form of milk
- Substituting tofu and soy beverage for milk in the quantities allowed
- Tailoring the dried beans/ peanut butter options from the model food packages
- Tailoring the whole grain options from the model food packages
- Tailoring the type of breakfast cereal (infant vs. adult) in food packages for children and women with qualifying conditions.

Tailor the food package based on access to refrigeration, food storage and cooking facilities.

Guidelines include the following:

- Determine the best packaging for juice. Limit the issuance of single serving containers to participants who have no acceptable food storage options.
- Determine the best form of milk and size of container.
- Provide peanut butter unless there is a compelling reason not to such as an allergy or inability to handle the food consistency.