

# What Is WIC?

WIC is a Supplemental Nutrition Program for pregnant and postpartum women, infants, and children under the age of five years old. WIC provides nutrition education, breastfeeding education and support, referrals, access to immunizations, and supplemental nutritious foods such as cereal, eggs, milk, whole grain foods, fruits and vegetables, iron-fortified infant formula, and referrals to prenatal and pediatric care.

WIC is available in all 50 States for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, infants, and children up to age 5 who meet certain requirements. These requirements include income eligibility; State residency; participation in other benefit programs such as the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, Medicaid, or Temporary Assistance for Needy Families. Additionally, the applicant must be individually determined to be at "nutrition risk" by a health professional.

Although breast milk is the most nutritious and complete source of food for infants, nationally less than 30% of infants are breastfed at 1 year of age. A major goal of the WIC Program is to improve the nutritional status of infants; therefore, WIC mothers are encouraged to breastfeed their infants, unless medically contraindicated. Pregnant women and new WIC mothers are provided breastfeeding educational materials and support through counseling and guidance.

## WIC Facts

- Breastfeeding mothers are eligible to participate in WIC longer than non-breastfeeding mothers.
- More than half of the infants in the U.S. participate in WIC.
- WIC participants support the local economy through their purchases.
- WIC works with farmers markets to help increase participant access to provide fresh, locally grown fruits and vegetables.

Those who are interested in applying for benefits should contact their local WIC office to request information on how to apply. In Meigs County, the WIC Program is administered by the Meigs County Health Dept. The Meigs County WIC Office can be reached at 740-992-0392 Monday-Friday from 8AM-noon and 1-4PM. Applicants will be advised on what to bring to the appointment in order to verify eligibility.

Lindsay Cundiff

WIC Clerk

