

Feds Finalize Changes To Special Supplemental Nutrition Program For Women, Infants and Children (WIC)

By Administrator

Friday, 28 February 2014 13:51 - Last Updated Friday, 28 February 2014 13:52

RALEIGH, (SGRToday.com) - Changes to food labels finalized this week by the federal government seek to improve public health by increasing access to fruits, vegetables, whole grains and low-fat dairy products. The changes made by the Department of Agriculture represent the first major update to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) in more than 30 years.

Over 8.5 million participants receive WIC benefits each month. "The updates to the WIC food package make pivotal improvements to the program and better meet the diverse nutritional needs of mothers and their young children," said Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack in a statement. "The foods provided by the WIC program, along with education that focuses on the critical role of breastfeeding and proper nutrition, help to ensure that every American child has the opportunity to grow up healthy and strong."

Along with a more than 30 percent increase in the dollar amount for children's fruits and vegetables purchases, the changes expand whole grain options available to participants and provide yogurt as a partial milk substitute for children and women.

Changes also allow parents of older infants to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables instead of jarred infant food if they choose, and they give states and local WIC agencies more flexibility to meet the nutritional and cultural needs of WIC participants.

The revisions align closely with recommendations of the National Academies' Institute of Medicine and the Dietary Guidelines for Americans.

WIC provides low-income pregnant, breastfeeding, and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age five with nutritious, supplemental foods.