



Urban Health Plan, Inc.

Richard Izquierdo, M.D.
 Founder
 Medical Director Emeritus

December 15, 2003

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Ms. Patricia Daniels, Director of Supplemental Food Programs Division
 Food and Nutrition Service, USDA
 3101 Park Center Drive (Rm.520)
 Alexandria, Virginia 22302

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Dear Ms. Daniels:

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In response to the USDA solicitation of comments: Revisions to Food Packages please, review the following suggestions.

Foods in the current WIC food package as it exists do provide essential nutrients identified to be appropriate of the WIC population. Milk and cheese continue to be important sources of Vitamin D and Calcium. Current research (Nutrition.org Jan 2003) suggests calcium play a role in combating obesity. It is implicated even at the cellular level to prevent the expression of the agouti gene by increasing lipolysis. (Hang Shi, et al. 2001). Furthermore, according to the NICDH (Journal of the American College of Nutrition: Miller, et al. 20(2) 168S), low - milk or low-fat milk products are the best sources of calcium because they contain large amounts of calcium along with...Vitamin D, magnesium, and potassium which are all essential for optimal bone and human development. In recent years there is also a the replacement of milk by other beverages such as soft drinks. This leading to calcium needs not being met. (Miller, JACN 2001) Having milk and milk products available in WIC will help to reinforce the importance of including dairy foods as a part of a varied diet.

The quantities of dairy foods should remain the same, however a broader list of allowable substitutions should be made available. Low-fat, low-sugar yogurt should be an allowable substitute for milk for women and children, and the amount of milk in the food package may be overwhelming especially if there are other children participating in the WIC Program at the same time. For those populations who do not include dairy foods as part of their diet, an allowable substitution of calcium fortified orange juice, canned fish, and/or frozen vegetables, especially green-leafy kinds, are good sources of calcium and other nutrients. This would increase availability of vegetables year-round and contribute to the 5-a-day campaign. These foods are accessible in most neighborhoods and are often on sale.

A food source of iron, used across all nationalities is pasta. This food is enriched in B-Vitamins, is easy to prepare, and inexpensive. Pasta is found in mostly all neighborhoods and is prepared in a variety of ways. For example, macaroni and cheese, meat sauce and noodles, noodles in soup. The whole grain versions of pasta would be a great allowable substitution or an additional food to add to the current WIC package. Pasta would be a recommended addition/substitution to the already existing foods, which supply iron, cereal or beans.


Aboagye
 Linda Baldwin
 John Clark
 Frank Estrada, M.D.
 Aida Fontañez
 Josephine Infante
 Joseph Marroero
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In conclusion, the WIC food package as a supplement to our participants' diet is appropriate for all nationalities as it relates to the nutrients they provide. Increasing the number of allowable substitutions to the food package would make the package more appealing and satisfactory to an individual's ethnicity. Nutrition professionals in the WIC Program would tailor food prescriptions to a broader WIC participant base, while at the same time allowing the participants' an active role in deciding which foods would best meet their families' needs.

Sincerely,



Michelle A. Downer
WIC Director

Director, Division of Community Nutrition, Department of Health and Human Services

Enclosure

cc:

Dr. [Name]

Sir,

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