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# 14-039

**TO:** WIC Regional Directors  
WIC Local Agency Directors

**FROM:** Linda Brumble, Unit Manager  
Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit  
Nutrition Services Section

**DATE:** March 31, 2014

**SUBJECT:** USDA Final WIC Food Package Rules

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On March 4, 2014, the USDA released the final WIC food package rule which is the final modification to the regulations that Texas WIC implemented in 2009. This rule is the outcome of extensive public comments and the experience of State Agencies in implementing the interim rules. The USDA also announced that it will start a new comprehensive review of WIC foods by the Institute of Medicine that will be required every ten years.

Highlights of some of the key changes in the final rule are listed below. The final rule includes required and optional provisions. The State Agency will be making decisions about optional provisions for Texas WIC in the coming months.

### Required Provisions:

- Allows pregnant women who are mostly breastfeeding singleton infants to receive the same food package as the exclusively breastfeeding woman (*implementation May 5, 2014*).
- Increases the children's cash value benefits from \$6 to \$8 per month (*implementation June 1, 2014*).
- Requires nonfat and low-fat milk (1%) as the standard issuance for children 24 months of age and older and women. Reduced fat milk (2%) is allowed only for participants with certain conditions, such as underweight or maternal weight loss (*implementation October 1, 2014*).
- Allows the Certifying Authority (CA) in consultation with the health care provider if necessary, to determine the need for soy milk and tofu for women and children, thus no prescription is required (*implementation October 1, 2014*).
- Requires split tender transactions with the cash value benefits for fruits and vegetables which allows participants to pay the difference when their purchase exceeds the value of their benefits (*implementation to be determined*).

**Optional Provisions:**

- Allows the CA to issue fat-reduced milks (1% or less) for one-year-old children based on a nutritional assessment and consultation with the health care provider, if necessary.
- Allows infants 9 through 11 months of age to receive cash value benefits for the fruits and vegetables in lieu of a portion of baby food.
- Allows whole wheat pasta as a whole grain option and yogurt as a partial milk substitute (*implementation cannot be earlier than April 1, 2015 for yogurt*).
- Allows WIC nutritionists to issue baby food fruits and vegetables to older children and women with special dietary needs.
- Expands the type of formula allowed to infants 6 months of age with a qualifying condition to receive additional formula in lieu of infant foods with a prescription (no longer limited to exempt formula).

More information about the changes to the final food rules is available on the USDA Food and Nutrition web site at <http://www.fns.usda.gov/wic/final-rule-revisions-wic-food-packages>. If you have any questions, please contact Paula Kanter, Clinic Nutrition Specialist, at 512-341-4574 or [paula.kanter@dshs.state.tx.us](mailto:paula.kanter@dshs.state.tx.us).