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## NEWS RELEASE

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
**September 4, 2009**

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### **CHANGES TO WIC (WOMEN, INFANTS, AND CHILDREN) PROGRAM STARTING OCTOBER 1**

ST. AUGUSTINE, FL. Over 500,000 women, infants, and children participating in the Florida Department of Health's WIC Program will receive the new, nationally revised WIC food package beginning October 1, 2009. This is the first change to the WIC food package in nearly three decades.

"The new food package helps reinforce key nutrition messages such as eat more fruits and vegetables, decrease saturated fat and cholesterol intake, and increase whole grains and fiber," said Annette Phelps, ARNP, MSN, Division Director for the Division of Family Health Services. "We are thrilled to provide WIC participants with a greater variety of nutritious foods."

Based on the 2005 Dietary Guidelines for Americans, the new food choices will allow the Florida WIC program increased flexibility in prescribing culturally appropriate foods to WIC's diverse population. Some of the changes include:

- the addition of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains for mothers and 1 to 5-year-old children,
- the addition of baby food fruits and vegetables for all infants age 6 to 12 months,
- the amount of formula for infants is now variable based on the age and breastfeeding regime of the infant, and
- the requirement that milk for women and children 2 years of age and older be 1-percent low fat or fat free.

The new package also strengthens WIC's breastfeeding promotion and support messages by providing strong incentives for continued breastfeeding, including additional quantities and types of foods for breastfeeding mothers and their infants.

Eligible women and children participating in the WIC program receive food checks that specify which nutritious food items can be purchased; these WIC food checks can be

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redeemed at any of the 2,000-plus authorized grocery stores in Florida. In addition to offering supplemental healthy foods, WIC provides the following additional services at no cost: nutrition education and counseling, breastfeeding support, and referrals for health care.

To be eligible for WIC—the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children—you must be a pregnant or breastfeeding woman, a woman who has recently been pregnant, an infant, or a child under age 5. In addition, the applicant must have a low or moderate income, live in Florida, and have a nutrition need that can be helped by WIC foods and nutrition counseling. Another way applicants can be income-eligible for WIC is if they are currently receiving Medicaid, Temporary Cash Assistance, or food stamps. Applicants do not have to be on a public assistance program to qualify for WIC.

Emphasis is also placed on reaching the migrant population, as well as reaching and enrolling eligible women in their early months of pregnancy so that WIC's benefits can begin as early as possible.

To schedule a WIC appointment or to get more information on eligibility requirements, please call at 904-825-5074. Walk-in appointments are welcomed on Monday thru Wednesday from 1:00 pm to 2:30 pm. To learn more about the Florida WIC program or about the new WIC food package, go to [www.FloridaWIC.org](http://www.FloridaWIC.org) or visit the St. Johns County Health Department website at [www.stjohnschd.org](http://www.stjohnschd.org).

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