

## Division of Community Nutrition

<i>Subject: Allowable Food Selection Criteria</i>		<i>Policy: FDS 01.1</i>
<i>Reference: CFR §246.10</i>	<i>Effective: November 15, 2016</i>	<i>Supersedes: October 1, 2014</i>

### I. Policy:

Foods for inclusion on the WIC Program Approved Food List shall be reviewed at least once every one to three years using specific criteria.

### II. Procedure(s):

#### A. Criteria

- 1) Nutritional value is the primary factor in selecting authorized foods in accordance with Food Standards. The nutritional value of foods as it relates to the cost shall also be considered.
- 2) Food item availability shall be considered when determining the final choices available for each food type. Foods shall currently be in stock in WIC-approved retail stores located in approximately 75% of local agencies. The exception is approved store brands which may be available only at specified retail stores.
- 3) Consumer preference shall be evaluated periodically through participant surveys when selecting or eliminating authorized foods.
- 4) Foods that contain fat substitutes are not allowed. Additives, such as artificial colors, may be allowed as long as they are on the FDA GRAS (Generally Recognized As Safe) List.
- 5) Food items that convey consumer messages that conflict with the WIC Program mission / vision statements shall be excluded.

#### B. Food items that meet the general specifications may not be allowed for use in Virginia if:

- 1) They also exhibit properties that are inconsistent with sound nutrition practices as specified in this policy;
- 2) There is potential for confusion (i.e. group of juices or cereals from one manufacture that have a similar name and package design / appearance of other products that do not qualify for the WIC Program and, therefore, increase the potential for confusion by retail stores and participants;
- 3) They are not readily available in retail stores located in 75% or more of the local health districts service areas;

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- 4) Food is not consistent with agency administrative decisions, i.e. minimum size restriction and does not promote agencies philosophy of good consumerism; and
  - 5) Other objective reasons as documented by the State WIC Office and/ or Nutrition Team.
- C. New foods may be submitted to the VA WIC Program for review during the application acceptance period by using the Allowable Food Application Form Information on food submission shall be posted on the [Virginia WIC Program's web page](#).
- D. Consumer / participants surveys / studies at the national, state and local level shall be used to identify the demand for new and existing foods.
- E. Foods can also be removed from the Program if there are changes in nutrient content, labeling, packaging, cost, or a product no longer meets federal or state standards. Foods that are to be eliminated shall be removed from the food list at the next revision.
- F. Applicants shall be notified by the State WIC Office of their food item's acceptance or rejection. Selection decisions are subject to modification based on program changes in funding and resource availability. Acceptance does not guarantee inclusion on the revised food list.
- G. Local agencies and WIC participants can submit food items for consideration using a Request for New Food Item Consideration form.