



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

News Release

LINDA LINGLE
GOVERNOR

CHIYOME LEINAALA FUKINO M.D.
DIRECTOR
Phone: (808) 586-4410
Fax: (808) 586-4444

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JUICE AND CHEESE TO BE LIMITED UNDER HAWAI'I WIC PROGRAM

HONOLULU — The Hawai'i State Department of Health's (DOH) Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) Program will be limiting certain types of juices and cheeses allowed for purchase by WIC checks issued on or after August 15, 2008. The changes are a result of rapidly rising food costs and an unprecedented jump in enrollment.

Bottled juices, along with shredded and eight-ounce packages of cheese will no longer be allowed under the WIC Program. Only the more economic frozen concentrate juices and one-pound blocks or balls of cheese will be allowed for purchase under WIC checks issued on or after August 15th. WIC vendors will honor checks issued earlier which specify either frozen or bottled juice. All other foods are not affected.

"The nutritional value of the package is not compromised by these changes," said Director of Health Chiyome Fukino, M.D. "Food costs have increased and statewide participation in the WIC Program has gone up by over 1,100 participants from June to July to an all-time high of 35,447 low-income women, infants and children. In order to continue serving all eligible families, some choices had to be limited to cut costs."

The price difference between bottled and frozen concentrate juice is conservatively estimated at \$2. Based on recent usage of 143,000 bottles per month, the WIC Program estimates a savings of \$3.4 million a year. These savings are expected to be offset by rising food costs next year.

More

WIC food packages are being extensively redesigned effective October 2009. Cash value vouchers for fruits and vegetables will be added as well as baby food.

Anyone needing further information may call the WIC Program at (808) 586-8080.

The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC), is a federally funded program which provides Hawai'i residents with nourishing supplemental foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding promotion and health and social service referrals. The participants of WIC are either pregnant, breastfeeding, or postpartum women, and infants and children under age five who meet income guidelines and have a medical or nutritional risk.

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For further information contact:
Melanie Murakami
WIC Program Support Section Chief
Phone: (808) 586-8080