

FAMILY CONNECTIONS

*News for Families from the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources,
Bureau for Behavioral Health's
Office of Children, Youth and Families*

*Family Connections
Issue IV*

School has started and summer is over. It's time to get into a new routine. Fall is great with all the colorful leaves, pumpkin flavored everything, warm sweaters, and cooler temperatures. Wishing all the students a successful school year with friends and lots of fun activities.



WEST VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAM

West Virginia WIC is excited to share information about the program and educate the public about the services we provide! In a broad sense, the services provided by West Virginia WIC can be broken down into four main service categories: nutrition counseling and parenting advice, breastfeeding support, food assistance, and referrals. Each of these categories allows West Virginia WIC to best help WIC participants and their families live a healthy life.

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WEST VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAM

Nutrition Counseling/Parenting Advice

Continued

Nutrition education provided by West Virginia WIC aims to encourage positive changes regarding eating habits with at-risk participants, teach about existing relationships between proper nutrition and overall health, promote the use of WIC supplemental and other nutritious foods, as well as provide ethnically and culturally diverse educational opportunities. To best deliver education to participants, WIC utilizes an online platform known as JPMA WICSmart. Internet education is easily accessible and readily available to all participants with internet access. Currently, the program offers 48 unique modules that touch on nutrition at all ages. Modules deliver information regarding the transition to table food from bottle or breastfeeding, as well as how to eat healthy as a breastfeeding mom. Other modules are more focused and can educate the participant on certain vitamins and minerals such as fiber, folic acid, and cholesterol. More broadscale modules teach participants how to shop on a budget, read food labels, and prepare healthy recipes. Aside from online education, WIC also offers a variety of nutrition services. Some of these services include hemoglobin monitoring, prenatal weight trends, assessments of diet and nutritional needs, as well as nutrition counseling. When used in conjunction with education, participants are more likely to reach their nutritional goals and live a healthier and



SELF CARE CORNER



Sometimes the
next step is
just to take
a deep breath
and let it go.

BlessingManifesting

WEST VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAM

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Breastfeeding/Support

WIC prides itself on supporting mothers on their breastfeeding journey! Breastmilk is unique to each baby and their nutritional needs, but also delivers immune properties that provide infants with protection from infections and disease. Breastfeeding is beneficial for mom as well. WIC staff strongly encourages pregnant women to breastfeed by addressing cultural, social, and financial barriers from early on. WIC staff are trained to complete appropriate breastfeeding assessments and implement the necessary interventions. WIC utilizes several methods to help promote breastfeeding. For example, the Breast Pump Program offers WIC participants quality pumps to support mothers that may want or need to supplement their baby's diet with their own milk rather than formula. WIC also provides enhanced food packages for mothers of fully breastfed infants. Lastly, WIC utilizes a Peer Counselor Program and the Pacify App to better engage with and serve breastfeeding mothers. The Peer Counselor Program provides support to mothers who may need around the clock support while breastfeeding and peer counselors may answer questions about storing breastmilk, pumping, or hand expression. The Pacify App offers 24/7 breastfeeding video support from Lactation Specialists free of charge to WV WIC participants with codes from their local agency!

Food Assistance

The WIC program is best known for its food assistance packages. The food packages offered by West Virginia WIC are tailored to suit the nutritional needs of the individual and their family.

WIC participants are provided with a monthly food package allowance, which helps the participant purchase supplemental foods that provide required nutrients. Foods are purchased with an eWIC card and include items such as infant cereal, infant foods, vitamin C-rich fruit or vegetable juice, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter, dried or canned beans, yogurt, whole grains, and fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables.

WIC also supports Farmers Markets and has established the Farmers' Market Nutrition Program (FMNP) for their participants. This program, established in 1993, provides fresh, unprepared, locally grown fruits and vegetables to WIC participants. Eligible WIC participants are issued FMNP coupons in addition to their regular WIC benefits each year from June through October. (Continued on next page.)

WEST VIRGINIA WIC PROGRAM

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WIC also realizes that new brands are coming out all the time, and food lists are constantly being revised on a yearly basis to offer the most exciting, yet nutritional foods and brands to each participant.

Referrals

Providing referrals to healthcare and social services is another added benefit of participating in the WIC program. WIC referrals can help participants and their families receive prenatal, obstetric, maternal, dental, and pediatric care. Services also include referrals to smoking cessation programs and substance abuse counseling. Referrals have helped WIC establish a program that fosters the health of their participants. WIC and its referrals are shown to be effective and have been linked to a reduction in premature births, low and very low birth-weight babies, fetal and infant deaths, and the incidence of low-iron anemia. WIC has helped increase access to prenatal care earlier in pregnancy as well as increase the consumption of key nutrients (iron, protein, calcium, Vitamins A and C) in pregnant women. WIC referrals and WIC have helped increase immunization rates, improve diet quality, and increase access to regular health care.

Who Is Eligible?

- Pregnant women
- Non-breastfeeding moms who have had a baby in the last 6 months
- Breastfeeding moms who have had a baby in the last 12 months
- Infants
- Children under the age of 5

Applicants must:

- Reside in West Virginia
- Have a medical or nutritional risk which does not exceed 185% of the U.S. Property Income Guidelines
- WIC office in the appropriate county will contact the applicant for an appointment.
- Visiting wv.gov/WIC and beginning the appropriate process online, and later the WIC office in the appropriate county will contact the applicant for an appointment.

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FAMILIES STRONG

WHAT IS NEW? GROUP MEMBERS CAN RECEIVE MONEY FOR PARTICIPATION

Family members and friends are impacted by their loved one's substance misuse and deserve to have a resource just for them. Families Strong, a **free**, 9-week support group, helps family members to build relationships, begin to prioritize and care for themselves and learn to use skills to improve their relationship with their loved one. A participant of Families Strong said, "The group has given me an outlet to express my feelings without judgement and also gave me tools to help myself through the process of dealing with a loved one in addiction."

Groups, led by trained West Virginia leaders, are regularly meeting virtually and in-person, with a new group starting every 4-6 weeks. Family members can self-register at www.familiesstrongwv.com.

Taking the first step to participate in a group can be difficult and people may need your help and encouragement to register and follow through with participation. Consider people in your professional and personal lives who could benefit from Families Strong; talk with those people about the program, help them register, help them understand how it can improve their quality of life.

Group members earn money for participation!

- \$10 after completion of the Pre-group Questionnaire and attendance at the first group meeting
- \$15 after completion of session 5
- \$25 after completion of session 9, the Post-group Questionnaire and Program Evaluation

For more information, please contact Dawn Brown, Families Strong Coordinator, by calling 443-525-1976 or emailing dbrown@groupmosaic.com.



WEST VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN RESOURCES

BUREAU FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH

NEW WEBSITE

The Bureau for Behavioral Health has updated their website with a new look and a new web address. The new address <https://dhhr.wv.gov/bbh>

RECIPE FOR BUSY PARENTS

Slow Cooker Southwestern Pot Roast

Ingredients

- 8 small red potatoes cut in halves
- 3-pound beef boneless arm roast trimmed of fat
- 2 tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 pound baby carrots
- 1 jar of thick and chunky salsa your choice

Place potatoes in a 3.5-4-quart slow cooker. Coat beef roast with flour placed on top of potatoes. Arrange carrots around beef. Pour the entire jar of salsa overall.

Cover and cook at low heat for 8-9 hours.

Remove beef from slow cooker and place on cutting board. Pull beef into serving pieces using forks. Spoon out desired vegetables and cover both vegetables and beef with remaining sauce. Enjoy.

Submitted by Dominique McAvoy



DO YOU HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL SERVICES?

We are now taking appointments for
FREE, VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON EDUCATION CLINICS

Talk one-on-one with an advocate about your child's
education rights.

TO REGISTER, CALL
1.800.281.4981
EVERY MONDAY
10 AM - NOON

Clinics will take place the first Thursday of each month

We can assist with issues related to:

- ⇒ IEPs
- ⇒ 504 Plans
- ⇒ Students with Disabilities
- ⇒ LGBTQ+ Students
- ⇒ Pregnant / Parenting Students
- ⇒ Behavioral Issues

... and other Education Law issues!



www.legalaidwv.org



Children's Mobile Crisis [Link](#)
HELP 4 WV [Link](#)
Children's Wraparound [Link](#)
Family Coordinators [Link](#)
State Family Advisory Board [Link](#)
Office of Children, Youth, and Families [Link](#)
Coalition Against Domestic Violence [Link](#)
Family, Advocacy, Support & Training (FAST) [Link](#)

[Click on the links for more information about these resources.](#)