



Dear Friend,

Research shows a healthy, balanced diet is critically important during a child's formative years. The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC) was created to improve the health of low-income pregnant, postpartum or breastfeeding participants and their infants and children up to age 5.

This pamphlet gives a general overview of the WIC program, along with information about eligibility and applying for benefits. For more information or help connecting with other resources during pregnancy and parenthood, contact the New York State Growing Up Healthy Hotline any time, day or night: **800-522-5006** (TTY 800-655-1789).

As always, if I can assist you further with this or any other matter, please contact my office.

Sincerely,

Carl E. Heastie  
Speaker of the Assembly



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# WIC

Supporting the health and nutrition of parents and their children during pregnancy and early childhood



Courtesy of Speaker of the Assembly  
**Carl E. Heastie**



## What is the WIC program?

WIC is a supplemental food program funded by New York State and the federal government that provides nutritious foods such as milk, cheese, yogurt, fresh vegetables and fruits, 100% juice, whole-grain pasta, rice, bread, cereal, formula, eggs, baby food and other items to eligible participants as part of a three-month “food package.” Participants purchase the food packages at retail establishments with redeemable food eWIC cards similar to a debit card.

The WIC program also provides breastfeeding/chestfeeding support and participant-centered nutritional education.



## Why apply?

The foods provided through WIC are a good source of essential nutrients often missing from the diets of pregnant and postpartum individuals and young children. According to the New York State Department of Health, WIC participants are more likely to have babies with a healthy birth weight, and children in WIC are more likely to do better in school.

## Who is eligible for WIC?

**You are eligible to apply to the WIC program if you are:**

- ▶ Pregnant.
- ▶ Up to 6 months postpartum (or up to 12 months postpartum if you are breastfeeding/chestfeeding).
- ▶ An infant or child up to age 5.

Either parent, as well as caretakers like grandparents or foster parents, are able to apply for an infant or child in their care.

**You must:**

- ▶ Reside in New York State. You do not need to be a U.S. citizen.
- ▶ Be receiving benefits from Medicaid, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) or Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) or meet the current income guidelines.
- ▶ Have a nutrition need.

See the current income guidelines and check if you qualify at [health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/eligibility.htm](http://health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/eligibility.htm).



## How do I apply for WIC benefits?

You can apply for WIC benefits through your local WIC agency. To find your local WIC agency, visit [health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/local\\_agencies.htm](http://health.ny.gov/prevention/nutrition/wic/local_agencies.htm) or call the Growing Up Healthy Hotline, available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week: **800-522-5006** (TTY 800-655-1789).