

Infant Feeding with Fresh Choices - Potentially Difficult Questions

It is often through the quality of our listening, not the wisdom of our words, that to answer any direct questions about Fresh Choices, we can assist participants in exploring how these changes will impact their lives by asking good open-ended questions. By letting the participant do the talking, they will be able to explore how these changes might affect them. Allowing our participants to find their own solutions to the changes made by Fresh Choices will help make this transition a smooth process for all. A gentle reminder about the spirit of Participant Centered Education (PCE): PCE shifts the focus from giving information and advice to exploring participant's concerns and strategies for change.

- **My vouchers only allow me to buy the 4 oz jars of baby food; my baby is already eating stage 3 that only comes in a 6 oz jar. Why can't I get stage 3 foods?**
- **My baby is 9 months old, and he eats the food the family eats. Are the jars of baby food better for him?**

How wonderful that your baby has advanced to more textures. Sounds like he may be ready for family foods- what do you think about that?

or:

It sounds like he is past the developmental stage of readiness for the foods that WIC offers for babies and that he is ready to start family foods. What do you think about that?

- **Why does the exclusively BF infant get more baby foods than the partially BF or fully formula fed infant?**
- **Is breast milk less nutritious than formula, since the exclusively BF infant gets infant meats as well as fruits and vegetables, while the babies getting formula only get fruits/vegetables?**
- **My neighbor's baby gets the jars of meat? Why doesn't my baby?**

Sounds like you are wondering about how WIC made the decisions for baby foods.

Just like the fully breastfeeding mom's package contains the most food, the fully breastfed baby's package contains more food.

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- **What should I do with all of the baby food he doesn't eat: there's so much.**

So the amount of baby fruit and veggies that you are getting on your vouchers is too much. We can change baby's vouchers to have less baby food. How much baby food are you currently using?

- **I've been making my own baby food since he started on solids, is the store bought baby food as healthy for my baby?**

*So you really want to provide the best nutrition for your baby, and are not sure if baby foods are as healthy as the foods you prepare. [option 1: Explore:]
What have you heard about store bought baby foods?*

Or [Option 2: give a fact:] Store bought baby food is safe and appropriate for babies just starting on solids, while your baby has already advanced to more flavors and textures. I would encourage you to continue to offer baby foods that you prepare rather than jar baby foods.

- **How do I use the jarred meats?**

Jar baby food meats are a good source of iron and zinc which are not found in baby food fruits and vegetables. You can mix the meats with either baby food vegetables or your own home-cooked [pureed, mashed or chopped -depending on age and stage of baby] vegetables.

- **Why aren't the jarred dinners ok for my baby? He loves ham and sweet potatoes.**

How nice that your baby is enjoying eating foods! Most baby food dinners have fillers or additives that your baby doesn't need. The foods that WIC offers are all single ingredient foods or fruit and veggie mixtures. You could try mixing two types of jarred foods together yourself or add in some home-cooked vegetables or soft mashed fruits. What do you think about that?

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- **Why does the older infant get less formula than before, and less than the younger infant? Seems like as they get bigger they need more formula not less.**
- **I don't know what you expect me to do, he drinks way more formula than he's getting. I don't know where I'm going to find the money to buy it.**

It sounds like you are worried that when your baby gets older, we may not provide enough formula him. What are your plans for starting solids foods?

I can see that you're worried about making sure your baby gets all that he needs to be healthy and keep growing as well as he has. He seems to have a really big appetite!

What are your plans for starting solids foods with him?

- **Why is there no juice in the vouchers for my baby?**

While we have removed the juice from the infant's food package, we have added baby fruits and veggies!

- **My baby doesn't like jars of baby food – can I just get more formula?**

It sounds like you are worried that when your baby gets older, we may not provide enough formula him. What are your plans for starting solids foods?

- **Why can't I get organic jarred baby foods?**

A lot of moms feel that organic baby food is best choice for their baby. All baby foods meet strict quality standards. Because the cost of organic baby food is much higher than non-organic, WIC is not able to provide it at this time.

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- **My baby only likes the vanilla pudding – what should I do?**

Babies are born preferring sweet over other tastes. There are other foods that are sweet tasting for baby and have more nutrition. What other foods have you tried with baby?

Or...

Sometimes babies refuse jar baby foods when they are ready to move on to table foods with more texture and flavors. What do you think about that?

- **Why can't I exchange the jarred baby fruits & vegetables for a fruit & vegetable voucher like the one I get?**

It sounds like your baby is past the developmental stage of readiness for the fruits and vegetables that WIC offers for babies and that he is ready to start eating family foods.

What kinds of fruits and vegetables is he eating?

When he turns a year old he'll start receiving a fruit and vegetable voucher similar to the one you are currently getting.

- **Why do we have to wait until the baby is 7 months old to receive baby food?**

[age of baby may influence how you answer this question] We wanted to be sure that all babies were fully 6 months old before we provided jar baby foods in WIC, which means that some babies will be in their 7th month when they first get baby food vouchers. If you'd like, I can share some ideas and recipes for making your own baby foods that you can start when baby is around 6 months old and showing signs of readiness for solids.

- **Why are "some" breastfeeding moms off of WIC after six months?**

Although you are not getting food you still have the benefit of the nutrition ed, and have a convenient place to ask your questions about breastfeeding, formula, and starting solids.

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- **I am a vegetarian, why do I need to give my baby jarred baby food meat? (breastfeeding mom)**

The jar baby food meats are one way to provide additional iron and zinc to your baby, and you do not have to purchase them. I would be happy to share with you some vegetarian food choices that have these same minerals, and ways to prepare them for baby. Would you be interested in discussing this together?

- **Will mom be afraid to start with stage 2 foods?**

If you compare stage 1 and stage 2, there is very little difference in texture. Also, by waiting until the baby is fully six months old, most babies will easily tolerate the texture of stage 2 foods.

- **Should my baby eat a whole jar of food in one sitting?**

Every baby is different, and even the same baby's appetite will change from day to day. We recommend putting several spoonfuls out of the jar onto a clean plate or bowl and then stopping feeding when baby begins to lose interest or refuses the food.