



# DO VITAMIN AND MINERAL SUPPLEMENTS BELONG IN WIC?

The National WIC Association (NWA) is the go-to voice of and for WIC leaders at the nation's more than 12,000 WIC locations across the country. We provide member-driven advocacy; educate, guide, and support WIC staff; and drive innovation to improve and strengthen WIC for the health of the nation's over 7 million women, infants, children, and their families.

WIC is the nation's premier public health nutrition program serving low-income women, infants, and children. **Along with nutrition education, the WIC food package helps meet the specific nutritional needs of WIC participants through a tailored prescription of supplemental foods selected to provide key nutrients found lacking in the diets of the WIC population.** The first priority in achieving good nutrition is consuming healthy food, like the ones offered in the WIC food package. **Supplements cannot replace a healthy diet.**

For over 40 years, WIC has supported low-income families in consuming nutrient-rich foods to promote healthy growth and development.

## STUDIES SHOW THAT THE WIC FOOD PACKAGE HELPS PROMOTE HEALTHY GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

- Approximately 97% of children participating in WIC had adequate intakes of calcium, iron, copper, magnesium, phosphorus, zinc, selenium, vitamin A, vitamin C, thiamin, niacin, folate, and vitamin B12.<sup>1</sup>
- WIC has been shown to decrease diseases associated with nutrient deficiencies, including iron deficiency anemia.<sup>2</sup>

## THE WIC FOOD PACKAGE SUPPLIES KEY VITAMINS AND MINERALS TO PARTICIPANTS' DIETS.

WIC FOODS	KEY NUTRIENTS PROVIDED
Fruits and Vegetables	Vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, folate, potassium, fiber
Commercially Prepared Baby Fruits/Vegetables and Meat	Vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, folate, potassium, fiber
Infant Cereal	Iron, B vitamins including folate, zinc
Milk	Calcium, vitamin A, vitamin D, folate, riboflavin
Whole Grain Cereals	Iron, B vitamins including folate, fiber, zinc
Whole Wheat Bread	Iron, B vitamins, magnesium, zinc, fiber
Light Tuna	Folate
Canned and dry beans/peanut butter	B vitamins including folate, fiber
Cheese	Calcium, vitamin A, vitamin D, riboflavin
Juice	Vitamin C, folate
Eggs	Vitamins A & D
Iron-fortified infant formula	Iron; B vitamins including folate, vitamins A, D, E, K, and C; phosphorus; magnesium; potassium; zinc; copper; selenium; iodine; manganese

- WIC participants have higher mean intakes of iron, vitamin C, thiamin, niacin, and vitamin B6, without increased calories.<sup>3</sup>

The National WIC Association supports the provision of nutrient-dense supplemental foods that help participants meet their micronutrient needs. NWA disagrees with efforts to include vitamin and mineral supplements in the WIC food package.

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Health Statistics (2015) *National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey Data 2011-2012*. Atlanta, GA. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Accessed online: <https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/nhanes/search/datapage.aspx?Component=Dietary&CycleBeginYear=2011>.

<sup>2</sup> U.S. General Accounting Office (1992) *Early Intervention: Federal Investments Like WIC Can Produce Savings*. HRD 92-18.

<sup>3</sup> U.S. Department of Agriculture Food and Nutrition Service (1987) *The National WIC Evaluation: An Evaluation of the Special Supplemental Food Program for Women, Infants, and Children*. Alexandria, Virginia: U.S. Department Agriculture.