



CALHOUN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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WIC HELPS CALHOUN COUNTY FAMILIES MAKE ENDS MEET

As food costs, job losses and other economic hardships mount, families are relying on the Calhoun County Public Health Department's Women, Infants and Children (WIC) supplemental food program to help meet daily needs.

The free program helps pregnant women, new mothers, infants, and young children up to age five eat well and stay healthy by providing healthy foods, nutrition education, and referrals for health and social services.

A Calhoun County WIC mother recently stated "Without your program we would not have been able to have my child grow up a healthy child. Thank you for helping so many women and children." More and more Calhoun county residents feel the same. "We assist over 5,000 women, infants, and children each year," stated WIC Program Manager Diana Buist. Across the state, Michigan WIC serves over 200,000 moms and babies each month.

Monthly foods that a family may receive from WIC include fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grain breads/buns/tortillas, breakfast cereals, brown rice, milk, cheese, eggs, juice, baby foods, and infant formula, although breastfeeding is highly encouraged and supported. WIC foods are worth \$30-\$115 or more per month for each participant.

The foods offered to participants were just revamped in an effort to meet more advanced nutritional guidelines and to appeal to various tastes and cultures. WIC food packages now provide less fat, more fiber, less sugar, and more variety. Breastfeeding woman and infants receive additional or increased quantities of food, and can be provided with breast pumps and assistance from breastfeeding peer counselors.

To qualify for WIC, families must meet income guidelines at 185 percent of the poverty level. That means a family of four qualifies by earning \$41,348 or less a year. Many working families who never thought of getting WIC benefits may qualify and should apply. Individuals on Medicaid or families who receive food stamps automatically qualify. To see if you qualify for WIC, call 269-969-6860.

For more information, visit

http://www.calhouncountymi.gov/government/health_department/women_infants_and_children_wic/

The WIC Program is a Federally-funded nutrition program of the United States Department of Agriculture. WIC is equal opportunity provider

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