



EXIT COUNSELING

HEALTHY CHOICES MAKE YOU AND YOUR FAMILY HEALTHY



Health and Nutrition Risk Factors

While you were on the WIC program, health and nutrition needs were identified for you and your children. You received supplemental foods, nutrition education, counseling and referrals to improve your health.

Continue using the information you have received to make healthy choices for you and your children.

Why Folic Acid?

- This B-vitamin can help prevent birth defects of the baby's brain and spine.
- Getting enough folic acid every day can help prevent birth defects in babies you may have in the future.
- It is very important after childbirth, too. Taking a multi-vitamin helps with cell growth and repair, something your body does every day.
- Folic acid may help prevent heart disease, stroke and some cancers.

Why are Immunizations Important?

Immunizations can save your child's life. You and your child can be protected against more diseases than ever before. Shots protect you and your family against diseases like measles, mumps, polio and whooping cough.

Immunizations protect others you care about. You and your children need shots at the appropriate time to help protect against disease. A child who is not up-to-date on immunizations affects not only the health of their family, but also the health of their friends, classmates, neighbors and the community.

Immunizations can save your family time and money. A child with a vaccine preventable disease may be kept out of school or the day care facility. A prolonged illness can cost lost time from work, medical bills or long term disability care.

Immunizations protect future generations. Vaccines have reduced or eliminated many diseases that killed or severely disabled people not too long ago.

What are the Health Risks of Alcohol, Tobacco and Other Drug Use?

- Smoking during pregnancy is the single most preventable cause of illness and death among mothers and infants.
- Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS) has life long consequences for children and their families, but is 100 percent preventable. If you're planning a pregnancy or are pregnant, don't drink.
- When a woman is pregnant, there is:
 - No safe time for alcohol, tobacco or other drug use*
 - No safe amount of alcohol, tobacco or other drug use*
 - No safe type of alcohol, tobacco or other drug use*

Why are Some Nutrients Important?

Food with Folic Acid help make healthy red blood cells and may reduce the risk of some birth defects.

- Orange Juice
- Eggs
- Cereals
- Bread
- Whole Wheat Tortillas
- Beans, Peas, Lentils
- Dark Green Vegetables
- Vegetable Juice

Food with Iron help make healthy red blood cells.

- Cereals
- Beans, Peas, Lentils
- Eggs
- Bread
- Canned Fish
- Infant Food Meats
- Whole Wheat Tortillas

Food with Calcium help build strong teeth and bones; help muscles work.

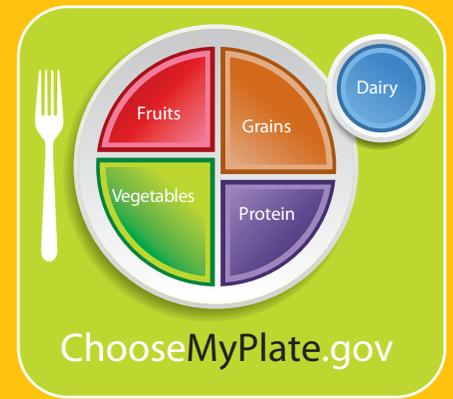
- Milk
- Cheese
- Tofu
- Soymilk
- Cereal
- Dried Beans
- Vegetables (spinach, kale, broccoli)
- Canned Fish (with bones)

Why is Breastfeeding Good for Mom, Baby and Family?

- Medical experts, such as the American Academy of Pediatrics, recommend breastfeeding for the first year of life and beyond.
- Breastfeeding can help a mother to bond with her baby.
- Nursing uses up extra calories, making it easier to lose the weight gained during pregnancy. It also helps the uterus to get back to its original size and lessens any bleeding a woman may have after giving birth.
- Breast milk is the most complete form of nutrition for infants and changes to meet the needs of the infant.
- Mother's milk has just the right amount of fat, sugar, water and protein needed for a baby's growth and development.
- Breast milk has antibodies in it to help protect infants from bacteria and viruses. Breastfed babies are more able to fight off infection and disease, such as diarrhea, ear infections and respiratory illness such as pneumonia.



Remember, every breastfeeding experience is different. It gets easier the more you breastfeed!



Planning for a Well-Balanced Diet

Before you begin a meal, think about what and how much goes on the plate.

- Half the plate should be fruits and vegetables.
- Make at least half your grains whole.
- Vary your protein food sources.
- Switch to skim or 1% milk.

Please visit www.choosemyplate.gov for more information on a well-balanced diet.



Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services

WIC and Nutrition Services

573-751-6204

health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/wicfamilies/apply.php

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