



Three Affiliated Tribes WIC Program March 2023 Newsletter

How to avoid processed baby foods and accompanying heavy metals



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On Feb. 4, 2021, the House Oversight and Reform Subcommittee on Economic and Consumer Policy released a report detailing its findings and concerns about the presence of heavy metals, such as lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic, in baby foods. Exposure to these metals in infancy has been linked to adverse neurological effects. The Subcommittee reached out to seven baby food manufacturers, four of whom responded to the inquiry. These are brands Americans know and love: Gerber, Beech-Nut, Earth’s Best Organic (Hain), and Happy Family Organics (Nurture). These companies have knowingly placed baby food products on the shelves that have unreasonably high levels of heavy metals, in some cases even violating their own internal standards on limits for heavy metals

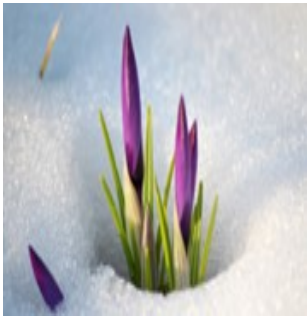
On Sept. 29, 2021, the Subcommittee released an updated report that included responses from the three manufacturers that had not initially responded to the Subcommittee’s inquiries: Walmart, Plum Organics (Campbell), and Sprout Organic Foods. The major findings confirmed that these manufacturers only test the ingredients, not the final products, for heavy metals, which leads to an underestimate of the true level of heavy metals in the finished baby food products. Here are a few quick workarounds TAT WIC* came up with:

- Replace rice baby cereal with regular oatmeal;*
- Replace rice puffs with Cheerios or similar cereal;*
- Pureeing foods, like potatoes, peas, beans or sweet potatoes in bulk, then freezing the puree in ice cube trays. Voila, individual servings of unprocessed baby food;*
- Mashed up avocado and banana are just as portable as canned baby food;*
- No juice or other drinks, just water and milk;*
- Regular basmati rice made at home; and*
- Much of your normal dinner food can be mashed up right at the table for baby.*

The above tips are only a few suggestions for avoiding processed baby foods. Plenty of parenting sites also offer tips for making your own baby foods. It’s time to get creative.

Please note that your WIC Program is making every effort to ensure that your infant receives safe, nutritious and ‘metal-free’ WIC foods. For more information please contact your WIC Program Staff.

*Article courtesy of author Jenny Shell.



REMINDERS

~ Nations WIC EBT cards can only be redeemed at participating stores. A list of vendors is available upon certification and on the mobile app, TAT WIC Website

~ WIC offers Nutrition Education contacts for recertifying participants online at wichealth.org or on the mobile app: NATION-SWIC.



ANNOUNCEMENT

TAINTED “BABY-FOODS AND CEREALS”

The FDA continues to advise WIC consumers to eat a well-balanced diet for good nutrition and to minimize potential adverse consequences from consuming an excess of any one food. **WIC parents can take several steps to reduce heavy metals exposure in their children, including to feed their children a broad array of healthful foods, including a variety of fortified infant cereals rather than rely solely on infant rice cereal, and for toddlers, provide a well-balanced diet which includes a variety of grains.** Additionally, parents should follow the advice of the American Academy of Pediatrics and feed their infants and toddlers a variety of foods as part of a well-balanced diet.

HEALTHY TAT WIC RECIPES CUCUMBER SANDWICHES

Ingredients

- 1 (8 ounce) package cream cheese, softened
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- 1 (.7 ounce) package dry Italian salad dressing mix
- 2 loaves French bread, cut into 1 inch slices
- 2 medium cucumbers, sliced
- 1 pinch dried dill weed

Step 1

In a medium bowl, mix together the cream cheese, mayonnaise and Italian dressing mix. Refrigerate for at least 6 hours, or preferably overnight.

Step 2

Spread the cream cheese blend onto slices of French bread. Top with a cucumber slice, and sprinkle with dill. You can make as many or few as you like. The cream cheese mixture keeps for about a week in the refrigerator so you can make them over and over again!

WIC TESTIMONIALS

My almost two year old loves raspberries, blueberries, and blackberries. These are some of the most expensive berries, therefore I have to budget them. He would eat the entire container of each in one sitting if I'd let him! The extra \$35 helps so much towards not only the berries but other fruits and veggies. I am beyond thankful for the increase, WIC is an amazing program that helps



Organization

Madeline Grinnell, TAT WIC Director
Nicole Decoteau, TAT Certifier
Shayla Gayton Breastfeeding Coordinator
Sabrina McIntosh, BF Peer Counselor
Melissa Rodriguez, TAT Vendor Coordinator
Sarah Hosie, Administrative Assistant
John Finn, TAT Nutritionist/Dietician

**USDA AND TAT WIC IS AN EQUAL
OPPORTUNITY PROVIDER AND
INSTITUTION**