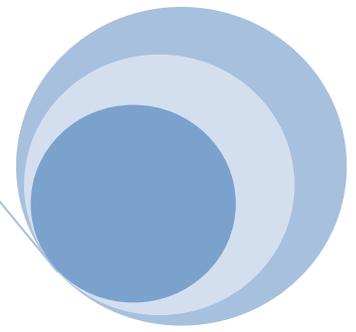


Healthy Food Access in WIC Households

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Purpose: To assess and recommend ways of improving access to healthy foods in WIC families and develop recommendations to improve WIC family access to healthy foods.

Background: The Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) provides medical care and food assistance for target at-risk populations. Healthy foods are crucial to healthy pregnancy and early childhood development. Access to healthy foods as well as food security is influenced by proximity, economic access, nutritional access, and cultural access. In 2009, 14.7% of people in the United States were food insecure. That same year, Washington State had a rate of 15% food insecurity and King County, 6%. In this study, WIC clients at High Point, Highline, White Center WIC clinics were interviewed using a food access and security survey, which included USDA Six-Item Food Security Scale. SNAP participation and food purchasing were assessed as well. The survey was conducted in English.

Key Recommendations

1. Increase SNAP usage through greater distribution of information about SNAP at WIC clinics
2. Ensure grocery stores are best serving WIC clients through improved communication between frequented WIC stores and the WIC office
3. Promote partnerships between WIC clinics and nearby food banks to provide additional food assistance
4. Improve access to healthy foods through food banks, corner stores, and farmers' markets
5. Increase nutrition education and information about healthy and nutritious foods at WIC clinics and communities through recipe distribution, community kitchen use, and shopping companions
6. Promote increased and future research in this line of study, including food access and security. The most prominent areas for future research include:
 - a. Shopping behavior related to transportation and store preference
 - b. The impact of zoning on food choices
 - c. Relationship between farmers' market use and the WIC farmers' market voucher program
7. Continue monitoring WIC participation and food security

Key Findings

- 51% of all respondents are living in food-insecure households
- Over a quarter of all participants obtained food from food banks, friends, family, farmers' markets, or gardens in the past year
- 70% of respondents using SNAP in the past year
- Of all food insecure WIC clients interviewed, 26% had not used SNAP within the past year
- Safeway (46%), Albertsons (15%), and WinCo Foods (12%) are the most commonly reported main stores
- Safeway is the most common store for WIC check redemption, followed by Albertsons
- 59% of respondents report spending at least some of their WIC check at the same store where they primarily purchase food
- 84% of all respondents primarily travel by car to reach the main store where they purchase food
- 85% of respondents reported it is easy to provide their family with foods that are nutritious
- 97% of respondents reported it is easy to provide their family with foods that are right for their culture or religion

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