

Using the *Let's Eat* Magazine as Nutrition Education

The “Let’s Eat” magazine from the National WIC Association and Meridith Publication Corporation is provided to Kansas WIC families as part of their ongoing nutrition education. Using a modern magazine format allows a large amount of information to be shared in concise quick articles rather than long difficult to read narrative.

The magazine addresses issues surrounding the addition of solid foods to an infant’s diet. Parents often have questions about how and when to begin offering solid foods. Friends, media, and family may have given them advice on what the best way should be to add new foods. This magazine provides tips to parents with advice that is scientifically based but easy to understand.

The information is split into 4 sections by age: about 6 months, 6-8 months, 8-10 months and 10-12 months. This allows the counselor to target advice to the specific needs of the parent and infant being seen in the clinic.

When the magazine is distributed to clients, they should not just be handed to the client as a “give-away”, but should be used as part of the nutrition education offered at that WIC appointment.

Below are several ideas on how the magazine could be used as part of the counseling/nutrition education experience:

1. **How to Know When to Start Solids**—Many parents see adding solid foods as a major milestone in their infant’s life. However, it is important to assure that the infant is developmentally ready for this next step. A list of developmental milestones that infants should achieve before starting solid foods is included as a way to counsel parents on what to look for. Refer to page 2 articles, *Let’s Eat* and *When is My Baby Ready for Solid Foods?*
2. **Sleep and Solids**—Use the section on *Baby Foods and Sleep* (page 3) to address issues surrounding the use of cereal or other baby foods in the bottle to increase sleep time in infants.
3. **The Importance of Breastfeeding**—When solid foods are added, some parents feel that breastfeeding may not be as important. The magazine provides three reasons why continued breastfeeding or formula feeding should be continued throughout the first year of life. Refer to *The Importance of Breastfeeding* on page 3.
4. **Sitting With Some Help-Around 6 Months**—This section of the magazine (pages 4 and 5) covers information on beginning to add solid foods once the infant meets all the developmental milestones. Practical tips are included about how to feed the baby using a spoon while she sits on the lap or a high chair. Information on foods to not feed the baby as well as what new foods to try at this age is included. Emphasis is placed on adding new foods slowly while looking for possible allergic reactions. Use the articles, *Your Baby’s First Solid Foods*, *What’s Next*, *What Not to Feed Your Baby*, and *New Foods to Try Now* as guides to emphasize to new parents what steps should be taken as they introduce new foods to their infant.

5. **Sitting Without Help-About Six to Eight Months**—This section (pages 6 and 7) includes information on progressing from smooth to chunkier foods, tips on serving baby food safely and encouraging the use of a spoon and cup, while avoiding adding food to the baby’s bottle. Pictures showing new textures to add and new foods to try help parents visualize what they can feed their child. This section also includes a fun quiz on starting cup use and limiting fruit juice. Use the articles on pages 6 and 7, *5 Tips for Serving Baby Food*, *New Foods to Try Now*, *Starting a Cup*, *Fruit Juice*, and *WIC Counselor TIP* to frame the conversation with parents on the next steps to take in introducing solid foods. Take time to go over the cup quiz as a way to introduce the use of a cup into counseling.
6. **Crawling-About Eight to Ten Months**—It is discussed here (pages 8 and 9) that as the baby becomes more accustomed to eating solid foods, the pattern of feeding starts to mimic the eating patterns of the rest of the family. Questions on the use of cow’s milk are answered along with information about self-feeding and developmental changes. Pictures showing new foods to try are included. New in this section is a sample menu which shows foods to offer along with appropriate serving sizes. It also emphasizes the use of three meals and three snacks to meet the child’s growth needs. Use this section to discuss how the baby is changing and expanding their food choices. Refer to the articles, *Cow’s Milk*, *New Foods to Try Now*, *Look What I Can Do!*, *On the Menu*, and *WIC Counselor TIP* found on pages 8 and 9 to guide your counseling.
7. **Learning To Walk-Around Ten to Twelve Months**—We learn here (pages 10 and 11) how infants at this age are starting to drink from a cup, eat with a spoon and are attempting to self-feed. The section provides a list of new foods and textures to try including more finger foods. Parents are encouraged to allow the baby to try feeding themselves despite the mess. It also talks about the fact that new foods may need to be offered many times before they are accepted by the child. Lastly, a sample menu of three meals and three snacks is included which show how an infant’s eating pattern can meet their nutritional needs using age-appropriate serving sizes. Structure counseling with parents to emphasize the transition to a toddler meal pattern and changes in textures of foods. Refer to the articles on pages 10 and 11, *Mom Talk*, *New Foods To Try Now*, *Let Him Make a Mess!*, *My Baby’s Tastes*, and *On the Menu* to frame the conversation.
8. **Play for All Ages**—The last page of the magazine (*Time to Play!*), page 12, offers ideas for parents on keeping their infant active at all ages. Using the same age splits as used previously in the magazine, it highlights the benefits to the infant’s physical development of using easy play activities. Counselors should use this section with parents to discuss ways they can help their child’s physical development through play and how it relates to other skills they are learning linked to eating and self-feeding.

For ease of documentation, the magazine is listed in the Nutrition Education Handouts section in the KWIC system.