



Panhandle Health District

Healthy People in Healthy Communities

Public Health
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Panhandle Health District

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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WIC is Here for You During COVID-19

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This is an uncertain time for all of us as we navigate our way through COVID-19. Despite the turmoil, Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) is here for you. Whether you are seeking services for the first time because you just found out you are pregnant, or your family's income has recently changed due to COVID-19, WIC is here to assist you. Questions about breastfeeding and the coronavirus? Is the store out of foods you purchase with eWIC? Can't find infant formula? WIC can answer these and many other questions for you.

According to the CDC, mother-to-child transmission of coronavirus during pregnancy is unlikely, but after birth a newborn is susceptible to person-to-person spread.

- A very small number of babies have tested positive for the virus shortly after birth. However, it is unknown if these babies got the virus before or after birth.
- The virus has not been detected in amniotic fluid, breastmilk, or other maternal samples.

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program federally funded and administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). WIC provides nutrition education and nutritious foods to eligible pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women, infants, and children up to age 5. Types of nutritious foods provided through WIC nutrition benefits are fresh fruits and vegetables, whole grains, eggs, cheese, beans, and milk. Infant formula and baby foods are also provided.

WIC in our community has temporarily changed the way we offer services, but we are still providing support, answering questions, and communicating with our clients. Benefits will not be interrupted. We want to ensure the safety and health of our participants so instead of meeting in-person, we will meet with them over the phone to provide nutrition education and issue WIC benefits during COVID-19 until normal operations can resume. In October 2019, Panhandle Health District's (PHD) WIC program transitioned to electronic-benefit transfer (EBT) cards known as eWIC. This is especially helpful during these times so staff can load benefits electronically after holding appointments over the phone. The benefits will then be available for use immediately. In the case of certifying new participants over the phone, cards will be mailed following the initial appointment with instructions for activation and use.

It has been reported by some WIC participants that they cannot find certain WIC items in the stores, including certain infant formulas. If this happens, please call your local agency for possible temporary substitutions. It is not safe to make homemade infant formula because it can be harmful to your baby.

Whether you have questions about eligibility for WIC, your upcoming appointment, breastfeeding, or WIC foods in the grocery stores, don't hesitate to reach out to your local clinic. We are all one in our community and we work to support each other to ensure we remain healthy and have access to nutritious foods. Our community is strong, and we will get through this together. WIC is here for you!

WIC, Panhandle Health District – 208-415-5130

Panhandle Health District provides over 40 different public health programs to families, individuals and organizations in northern Idaho. From food and drinking water safety to health education and disease control, public health services are critical to ensure our community is a safe and healthy place to live, work and play.

The PHD team is made up of nurses, nutritionists, environmental health specialists, health educators and many other dedicated professionals with a common goal to deliver vital public health services.

Panhandle Health District is one of seven health districts in the state of Idaho.

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