

Revised WIC food package may aid child development

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(HealthDay)—Revisions to the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program

for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) may offer downstream child health benefits, such as increased length-for-age z scores and improved infant cognitive development, according to a study published online Jan. 25 in *Pediatrics*.

Alice Guan, M.P.H., from the University of California in San Francisco, and colleagues obtained data from a cohort of 1,222 women and children enrolled in the Conditions Affecting Neurocognitive Development and Learning in Early Childhood study from 2006 to 2011. Measures of growth and cognitive and socioemotional development were compared between WIC recipients and nonrecipients before and after policy revision using a quasi-experimental difference-in-differences analysis.

The researchers found that among infants whose mothers received the revised WIC food package during pregnancy, length-for-age z scores at 12 months were higher and Bayley Scales of Infant Development cognitive composite scores at 24 months were higher ($\beta = 0.33$ and 4.34 , respectively) compared with the scores for infants of mothers who did not receive the revised WIC food package. No effects were observed on growth at age 24 months or age 4 to 6 years or on [cognitive development](#) at age 4 to 6 years.

"These findings provide timely and critical evidence for the role that WIC plays in improving the health of the nation's most [vulnerable populations](#), suggesting meaningful impacts of the revised WIC food package on [child development](#)," the authors write.

More information: [Abstract/Full Text \(subscription or payment may be required\)](#)

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