POLICY NOTICE

Date: September 28, 2001       Reference #: CACFP DCH 2001-16
To: Child and Adult Care Food Program-Day Care Home (CACFP-DCH) Contractors
Subject: Infant Meal Pattern and Early Introduction of Solid Foods

In response to an inquiry regarding the introduction of solid foods to infants younger than 4 months of age, USDA has clarified that a physician's prescription - approving the addition of solid foods, specifying which solid foods, and the quantity and consistency of such foods - is required before the addition of other foods to the meal pattern of an infant younger than 4 months of age. This guidance supports current policy that any change or substitution to the required meal pattern for any child must be accompanied by a statement from the child's physician.

This guidance is based on the following scientific references:

- "If solid foods are introduced before the infant is ready, these foods may displace breast milk or formula, resulting in inadequate energy and nutrient intake. In addition, because the digestive system is not well developed before 4 to 6 months of age, feeding solids can increase the risk of digestive problems and food allergies." Bruno, G., Prevention of atopic disease in high risk babies (long-term follow-up). Allergy Proc. 1993:14:181-186.


Updated: October 13, 2001