

# WIC Food Package Recommendations: Gerber Insights and Research

October 27, 2022

Prepared for Office of Management and Budget

# Agenda:

- Introduction
- Infant Cereal and importance of Iron
- Infant Foods and the importance of Variety and Choice
- Modernizing the infant food packages to align with the Dietary Guidelines for Americans



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3 surveys conducted in the U.S.  
over 18 years

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10,000 parents and caregivers  
surveyed

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Nationally representative sample

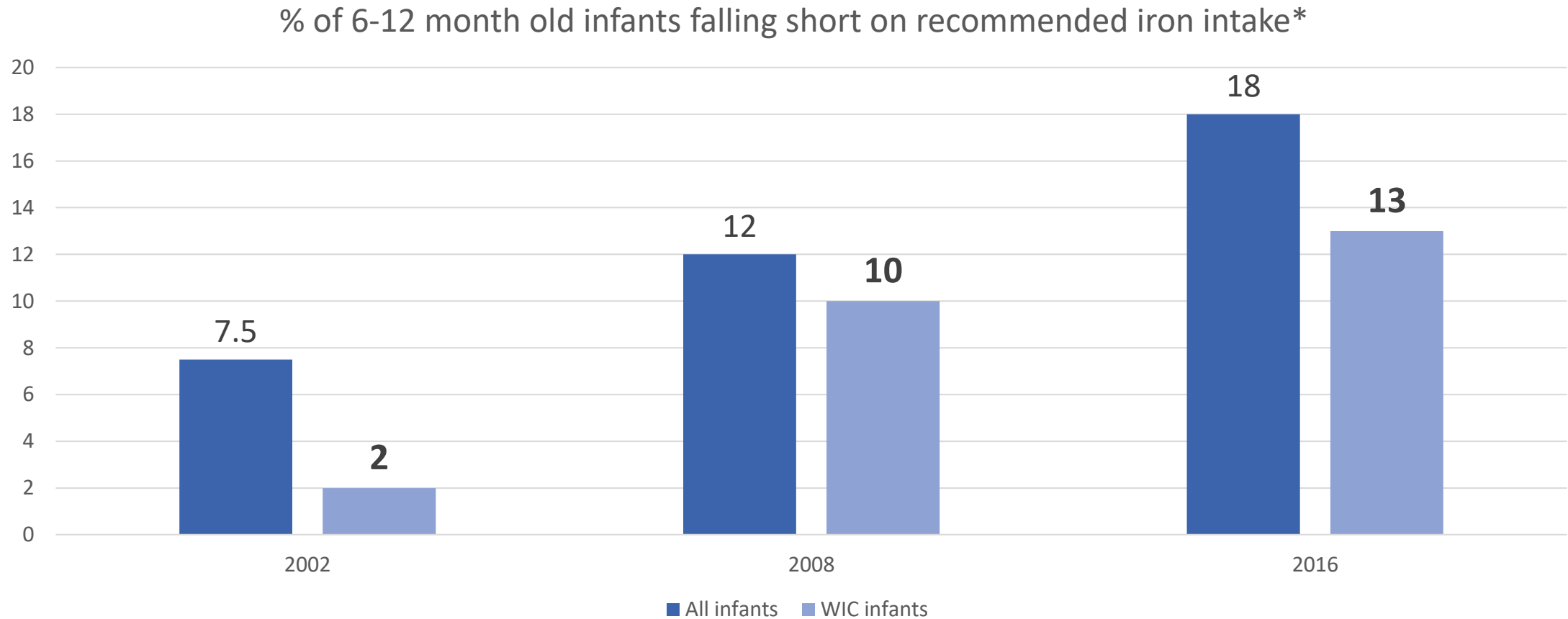
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65+ publications

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# Iron Inadequacies Are Widening Since the Early 2000's



FITS 2016 Shinyoung

FITS 2008 Unpublished see Deming D et al JNEB 2014

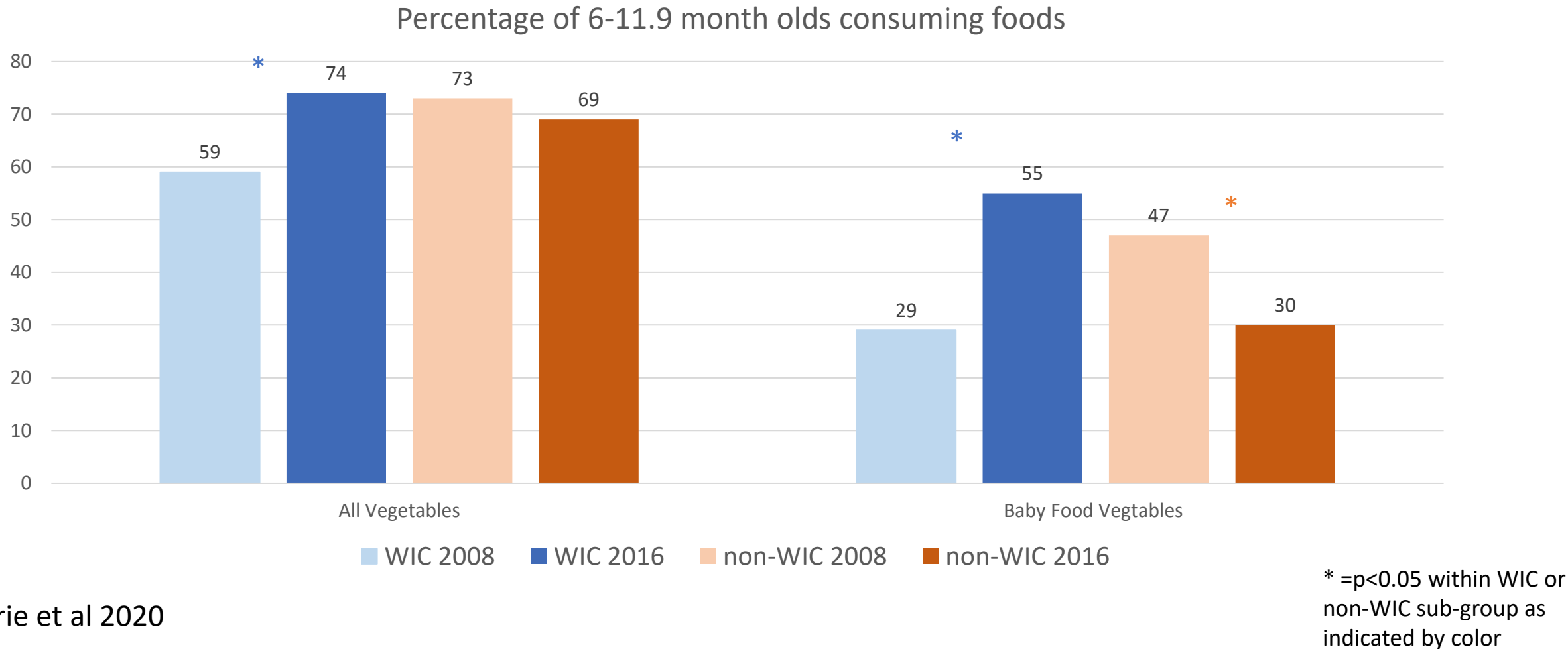
FITS 2002 Ponza M et al JADA 2004

\*EAR for iron is 6.9 mg/day; includes iron from food, beverages, and dietary supplements

# Evidence from FITS on the Critical Role of Infant Cereal in the Diet of Infants

Key Finding	Publication
96% of breastfed and 70% of partially breastfed infants do not meet dietary iron recommendations when they do not eat iron fortified infant cereal	Finn K, Quick S, Anater A, Hampton J, Kineman B and Klish W. Breastfed and mixed fed infants who do not consume infant cereal are at risk for inadequate iron intake: data from the FITS 2016, a cross sectional study. BMC Pediatrics 2022 22:219
20% of fully formula fed infants have a dietary iron intake gap when iron absorption factors are considered  Infant cereal is the top food source of iron for all infants	Abrams S, Hampton JC, Finn K. A substantial proportion of 6-12 month olds infants have calculated daily absorbed iron below recommendations, especially those who are breastfed. J Pediatrics 2020 Nov; S0022-3476(20)31370-6

# More WIC infants Ate Vegetables in 2016 Than 2008, Largely Due to Baby Food Vegetables



# Consumer Insights Can Help Inform Food Packages

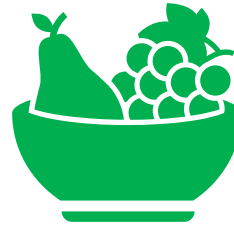


## Timing

### INSIGHTS:

WIC foods are purchased out-of-pocket before package benefits begin

Some foods on the package are perceived as beginning foods



## Variety

### INSIGHTS:

Non-WIC infant foods are purchased out-of-pocket to give their child more variety

Consumers use all varieties of infant cereals instead of only "plain grain" and all varieties of nutritious baby food purees



## Flexibility

### INSIGHTS:

WIC participants want to redeem benefits online, even in bundles, with maximum flexibilities in choices

# Infant cereals and baby foods can help infants meet the recommendations of the Dietary Guidelines

Introduce infants to nutrient dense complementary foods

Include foods rich in iron and zinc

Introduce infants to potentially allergenic foods

Avoid foods with added sugar

Encourage infants to consume a variety of foods from all the food groups

Limit foods higher in sodium