

wic's WORLD

Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment WIC Program

WIC TRAINING EDITION

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This issue:

A short reference guide published annually to compliment the details in the Retailer Handbook.

Please share this information with all your staff!



What is the Purpose of WIC & WIC Foods?



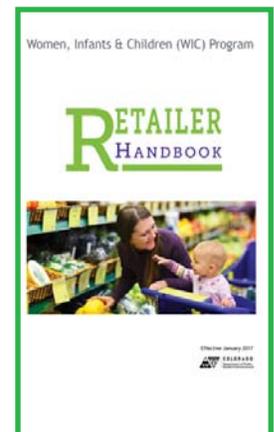
WIC stands for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. WIC was established by Congress in 1972 in recognition of the need for better nutrition during pregnancy and early childhood development. WIC provides supplemental foods, breastfeeding support, health care referrals and nutrition education for infants and children up to age five and pregnant, breastfeeding and postpartum women who are found to be at nutritional risk.

Women participating in WIC have improved diets and give birth to healthier babies. Health care costs are reduced due to the decrease in the number of low birth weight babies. Participation in WIC can lower Medicaid costs by helping to combat poor nutrition at an early stage, rather than treating its effects once they becomes more serious. For every dollar spent on WIC, up to \$3 is saved in medical costs.

What is Your Role in WIC? (Thanks!)

WIC grocers, commissaries, pharmacies and farmers play a vital role in helping to improve the health of their community. WIC foods are like a food prescription designed to supplement the WIC family's nutritional needs. Your store helps fill the nutrition prescription by helping the family receive exactly what foods are prescribed.

WIC vendors are important partners in improving the health of Colorado communities. The *Colorado WIC Retailer Handbook (Handbook)* provides information on the partnership between WIC and your store.



What are the Approved Supplemental Foods?

Supplemental WIC foods are prescribed for families based on the nutrient content. Food items must meet strict Federal nutrient requirements (as outlined in 7 CFR Part 246) in order to be considered for WIC. Only approved WIC foods in the quantities and sizes prescribed to the WIC families may be purchased with WIC.

The specific foods offered are listed in the *Colorado WIC Allowable Foods List (Foods List)*. The Foods List shows the brands, sizes and features of allowed items. An advisory committee made up of grocers and WIC staff work together to produce updated lists.



Both WIC customers and retail cashiers should refer to the *Foods List* during WIC transactions if there are any questions about a food item. Make sure that each cash register has the most current *Allowable Foods List*. Additional copies of the list (in English and Spanish) can be obtained by calling the State Office at (303) 692-2400 or by calling your Local Agency WIC office.

What do Grocers Need to Stock?

Grocery stores are not required to stock all flavors and brands of each of the over 7,000 WIC items. However, they do need to keep an ample supply of basic WIC foods. Bottom line: Retailers are required to stock certain authorized items at all times in sufficient quantities to meet participant demand.

Which foods do you need to stock? Below is a listing of the required food categories. Specific Colorado WIC-authorized brands and sizes for the following items are as defined in the current *Foods List*. Waivers may be requested for the baby items in certain cases. Check out the Handbook for more details.

- Baby Formula (Enfamil Infant and Enfamil ProSobee).
- Baby Food (Fruits & Vegetables, Meat).
- Cheese.
- Eggs.
- 100% Juice.
- Milk.
- Cereal.
- Peanut Butter.
- Beans.
- Canned Fish.
- Fruits and Vegetables.
- Whole Grains (bread and brown rice or tortillas).

Is There Help with WIC Foods?

Yes! In addition to the *Foods List* and the *Handbook* (which explain a lot!) below are a couple of great resources to lend a hand in figuring out if an item is provided by WIC.

- The Approved Product List: lists the thousands of items approved along with their UPC codes to search or print details of a specific item or food groups.
- Yogurt Helper: shows the brands, names and UPC codes of the allowed yogurt items.
- WICShopper mobile app: when downloaded on a smart phone, provides access to the Foods List and lets the user scan an item at the store to see if the item is WIC allowed. WIC families can also see the foods left in their account balance.

Yogurt Helper for WIC Retailers: A List of WIC-Allowed Yogurts

• ALLOWED:
 1. 32 OZ TUBS (8 OZ)
 2. PLAIN, VANILLA, ORANGE
 3. HONEY/LICORICE & MANGO
 • NOT ALLOWED:
 1. GREEK
 2. FLAVORS OTHER THAN PLAIN OR VANILLA
 3. GELATO/INDIAN
 4. YOGURT WITH ADDS: THOSE 24 CANS OF YOGURT PER 8 OZ SERVING
 5. ARTIFICIAL SWEETENERS SUCH AS SUCRALOSE & SUCRALOSE & STEVIA
 6. 50% OR HIGH-DILUTED YOGURT

Brand	Flavor/Variety	UPC/Barcode	Fat Content
DANONE	Danone Low Carb/Orange Vanilla Yogurt	088710428110	White
	Danone Low Carb/Vanilla Yogurt	088710428100	White
	Danone Low Carb/Mango Yogurt	088710428120	White/Licorice
CHOBANI	Chobani Greek Plain Yogurt	041470000000	White
	Chobani Greek Vanilla Yogurt	041470000010	White/Licorice
	Chobani Greek Mango Yogurt	041470000020	White/Licorice
DANONE	Danone Plain Yogurt	011110000000	White
	Danone Vanilla Yogurt	011110000010	White/Licorice
	Danone Mango Yogurt	011110000020	White/Licorice
DANONE	Danone Light & Fit Greek Plain	014622000000	White/Licorice
	Danone White with Blueberry	014622000010	White
	Danone White with Vanilla	014622000020	White
DANONE	Danone Greek Plain	014622000030	White/Licorice
	Danone Greek Plain	014622000040	White/Licorice

Current as of July 2017

These items and more are available on the website: www.coloradowic.com. For example, retailers can find contact information for local & state WIC staff and check out updates.

Where Should Grocers Obtain WIC formula?

To ensure integrity, retailers (e.g., grocery stores, commissaries, farmers and pharmacies) are required to purchase infant formula from approved suppliers (i.e., approved wholesalers, distributors and retailers licensed in Colorado and through manufacturers registered with the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that provide infant formula). [A list of authorized formula sources is located at: www.ColoradoWIC.com](http://www.ColoradoWIC.com). Follow the links related to retailers, retailer authorization, and approved suppliers.)

How Does a WIC Purchase Work? (eWIC)



WIC families receive an eWIC card at their local clinic to take with them to the store when doing their WIC shopping. The same card is used month after month. Several months of food benefits may be issued to the family's account, however only the current month's benefits are available to the family. The family can use the eWIC card at any Colorado WIC-authorized retailer.

The family can also have someone else do their shopping for them.

In a typical eWIC transaction, when an order is rung up and the eWIC card is swiped, the store's cash register Point-of-Sale (POS) system is connected to the family's account that holds the food benefits. It compares the items in the WIC shopper's account with the items being purchased. Items that are in the account balance, are an approved item (and listed on the *Approved Product List*) and are allowed for that shopper can be purchased through the eWIC card. The WIC customer may use other forms of payment (such as cash, personal check, credit, SNAP, gift cards, etc.) to pay for any remaining balance of non-WIC items. The customers may also decide to void the items that are non-WIC.

How Does WIC Protect Funds?

WIC has designed systems to prevent and sanction abuse of WIC funds by staff, WIC families or retailers. These systems identify retailers who, through misinformation or lack of training, may intentionally or unintentionally violate Federal regulations, program policies and procedures, or the terms of the Retailer Agreement (the agreement signed by retailers to participate with WIC). Violations that trigger sanctions do not require WIC to distinguish between fraudulent (intentional) and abusive (unintentional) violations because both types of violations result in loss of program funds.

WIC determines the type and level of sanctions to be applied against retailers based upon the severity, nature and pattern of WIC violations observed and other factors as appropriate. For example, whether the offenses represented retailer policy or whether they represent the actions of an individual employee who did not understand WIC rules. The objectives of WIC can best be met through education, training, the voluntary cooperation of retailers, your WIC customers and the state and local WIC programs.

To ensure the integrity of WIC it is necessary to impose corrective actions consistently against retailers who are in violation of program policies and procedures. There are six types of actions:

1. Nonpayment of WIC transactions.
2. Warning/Notification Letter.
3. Corrective Action Plans (CAP).
4. Mandatory training.
5. Civil Money Penalty (CMP) (may be imposed if WIC determines that disqualification would result in inadequate WIC client access).
6. Disqualification.

Finding of program violations are assigned points. Details of the violations and points assigned for each as well as sanctions and appeal procedures are detailed in the *Handbook*.

How Can a Grocer Report a Complaint?

WIC strives to make the transaction experience flow as smoothly as possible. In the event that this is not the case, complaint forms are available to WIC families and retailers. If you have questions, comments or concerns, contact your Local Agency Retailer Coordinator (LARC). If you are calling about a WIC customer, please try to have their name or card number. This information assists WIC to identify the correct individual.



Buying, selling or otherwise misusing WIC benefits is a crime. To report suspected abuse, call 800-424-9121, visit www.usda.gov/oig/hotline.htm or email cdphe_askwic@state.co.us.

How are Prices Determined?

Price Surveys: The *Shelf Price List* (in the *Handbook*) must be submitted to Colorado WIC at least every six months. Retailers are encouraged to submit an updated price list when prices change significantly. Prices must reflect the full shelf price. Sales or promotions should not be included. Grocery stores and commissaries must mark the prices clearly on the product or shelf at all times. Violations will be assigned to retailers that do not submit a price survey at least once every six months. Shelf prices must be found at application and remain competitive with other retailers in the peer grouping to within 10 percent. WIC also reviews the prices charged during WIC purchases.

Peer Groups: A peer group is based on criteria that classifies the store type (i.e., supermarket, small grocer, supercenter, pharmacy, commissary), the geographic area (based on US Census Bureau) and the number of WIC authorized stores owned and operated in Colorado. While they are sent periodically, contact the state WIC office with requests for your store's peer group.

The Program will evaluate prices throughout the agreement period (January 1, 2017-December 31, 2019). If prices are not competitive, one request will be made to the Retailer asking for a re-evaluation of their prices and resubmission of an updated *Shelf Price List*.

What are WIC's Claims Procedure Details?

WIC transactions are reviewed before payment to determine if policies and procedures have been met, including item price. Retailers will be reimbursed for the agreed amount for each item, which is the average price charged by the item by the store's peer group. Retailers that exceed pricing limits are subject to reductions to their claims, both prior to payment and subsequent recoupment after payment. If you believe there to be a price or a transaction payment that is not accurate, please contact Colorado WIC at 303-692-2454.

A retailer that has a high percentage of rejected WIC transactions (e.g., prices over the agreed upon amounts, lack of stock, etc.) is considered a high-risk retailer. Compliance investigations may be conducted on high-risk retailers, as well as randomly, to document compliance with policies and procedures. Please refer to Section V of the *Handbook* for more information.

Use of Incentive Items

Incentive items are not to be offered solely to WIC customers by any WIC-authorized vendor. Stores must offer WIC customers the same courtesies as offered to other customers, e.g., no separate lines or hours. Any practice that singles out your WIC customers from other customers is prohibited. Such practices include keeping lists of your WIC customers, having them sign cash register receipts, having specific register lines WIC customers must use, keeping folders for each WIC customer, keeping WIC customer receipts or the offering or denial of incentives solely to WIC customers. In accordance with Federal law and US Department of Agriculture policy, all authorized retailers are prohibited from discriminating on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, age or disability.

What are the Main Steps in a WIC purchase?

eWIC purchases and receipts look and work differently depending on your store's POS system. For example, most stores integrate the eWIC purchases into their cash register systems while a few use a special piece of equipment that is called a 'stand-beside' process. The POS system verifies much of the information in a WIC purchase. While purchases may look a bit different depending on your store's register system, there are some main steps in the eWIC purchase that are similar across the state, including:



Approved Product List (APL): A listing of WIC foods and barcode numbers is sent nightly by WIC to your POS system to make sure stores have the most updated version.

Swipe: The eWIC card is another form of tender. When the WIC shopper is ready to check-out they will swipe their eWIC card before other forms of tender and enter their PIN.

Verification: When items are scanned and the shopper uses the eWIC card and enter the

PIN, the system will verify several things, including:

Verifies the PIN and card number and connect to the shopper's food balance.

Checks the APL to assure that item (e.g., size and brand) is WIC approved.

Checks the WIC shoppers food balance to assure the item is available to the shopper.

Checks the price (and adjust to the expected amount).

Gives the shopper a chance to approve the WIC purchase.

Easy: Retailers do not have to confirm WIC benefit dates or foods The POS system will either allow the item to be paid for with WIC or request another form of payment for the items being purchased.

No Overrides: Cashiers cannot override an item. However, in the rare case you find an item you believe should be on the approved list, please submit the item details to WIC for review.

Receipts: The receipt will give the shopper the list of WIC items purchased, the WIC amount purchased and show them the foods left in their balance.

Transitioning from checks to eWIC was a huge change.

**Although it is an easier experience for our WIC families and stores,
it came with a few headaches along the way.**

We want to take a moment to thank you for your continued support and patience.

WIC is grateful to the dedicated cashiers, managers and owners like you.



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