
WIC Approved Foods

Who decides what foods are WIC approved?

The types and quantities of foods authorized for the WIC Program are specified in federal regulations. These foods have been chosen because they are high in nutrients that meet the WIC Program's specific nutrient requirements. They include cereals, fruit juices, milks, yogurt, eggs, cheeses, beans, peas or lentils, peanut butter, canned fish, fruits and vegetables, whole grains, tofu, soy beverages, infant formulas, jarred baby foods and infant cereals. Each state develops a list of the specific types of foods and/or brands approved for its WIC Program. Additional factors the state may consider when designating approved foods include, regional preferences, availability throughout the state, package sizes and competitive pricing.

What foods are on the Vermont WIC approved food list?

The Approved Product List (APL) is available on the Vermont WIC program website. Only the varieties, brands and package sizes listed are approved. The specific UPCs and PLU's for the approved products on Vermont's APL are included in our UPC database. The APL is updated annually while the UPC database is updated regularly and posted at least monthly <http://www.healthvermont.gov/children-youth-families/wic/grocers>

Mapping of Fresh Produce

What is "Produce Mapping?"

Produce Mapping is a functionality of your integrated Point of Sale (POS) software that allows you to link a UPC to a PLU listed in the VT WIC Approved Products List (APL). Vermont welcomes "full" or "one-to-one" mapping, which means that an approved fresh produce item with a UPC can be mapped to a PLU for the same kind of item. For example, cut up watermelon with a UPC would be mapped to a PLU for bulk watermelon. When "full" mapping is not possible, we will also accept mapping to the generic 4469 code, although this does not allow us to know specifically what items our families are purchasing and are most popular.

Why is produce mapping necessary?

There are several reasons why it is necessary to map WIC allowed UPC produce to a PLU. First, it is very difficult for VT WIC to keep track of all the different produce UPCs, so retailers can make sure that all WIC authorized produce can be purchased with a WIC card by mapping the UPCs. Additionally, it can take 2-3 days for any new UPC to be added to the APL, which might be too slow for some seasonal items. Retailers can allow a produce item for sale much faster if they map the

UPC to a PLU. Lastly, some of the UPCs are regional or retailer-generated and cannot be added to the APL.

Who completes mapping for a store?

In corporately owned stores, the mapping may be completed at the corporate office. In independent or decentralized stores, mapping is typically completed at store level.

What foods need to be mapped? What should not be mapped?

All authorized fresh, plain, fruits and vegetables with UPCs must be mapped. This includes items that are cut up by the store, but it also includes more commonly available brand name packaged items like a bag of Bolthouse Farms baby carrots. It is not necessary to map varieties to a specific PLU. For example, a bag of Honeycrisp apples, just needs to be mapped to a PLU for apples; it is not necessary to map to the PLU for bulk Honeycrisp apples.

Who can help me with mapping?

Your POS provider is responsible for providing instructions on produce mapping. The VT WIC staff can tell you if an item is authorized and needs to be mapped but are not equipped to help with the process.

Where can I find a list of the PLUs in the APL file?

You can download from the International Federation for Produce Standards website:
<https://www.ifpsglobal.com/>.

Why are only certain types of infant formula approved?

WIC regulations require each state to have a cost containment plan in place for infant formula.

What are the requirements for infant formula purchases?

Vermont WIC has a competitive bid contract with Abbott Nutrition for all standard infant formulas including Similac Advance, Similac Sensitive for Spit-Up, Similac Sensitive for Fussiness & Gas, Similac Total Comfort and Similac Soy Isomil.

Infant formulas must be purchased from the list of wholesalers, distributors, retailers, or manufacturers provided by the Vermont WIC program. You may not purchase formula from any other source. See Appendix V for Vermont's list of Approved Infant Formula Suppliers.

Substitution of other formulas is prohibited unless the WIC food benefits list clearly specifies another brand.

In addition, the following restrictions on formula purchases apply:

- A participant may not purchase formula and later exchange it for another formula.
- A participant may not purchase another type of formula if the brand printed on the WIC food benefits list or balance inquiry is out of stock.
- A participant may not purchase formula and later return it for cash. If you suspect that someone is requesting a cash refund for infant formula purchased with an WIC card, please report the information to the State WIC office. Remember, under no circumstances may a customer purchase a different formula than their food benefits list or balance inquiry specifies.

NOTE: The rebate contract goes out for bid every few years, and the contract brand may change from time to time. At the time the bids are awarded, all WIC Grocers will be notified. As the contract formula represents over 98% of WIC formula purchases, a change in the company awarded the contract will make quite a difference in the movement of your infant formula stock.