2013 Training WIC Wise

Annual training is a requirement for all WIC-authorized grocery stores and pharmacies. The training issue of WIC Wise meets that requirement. Please circulate this newsletter to all store employees that handle WIC transactions.

Exciting, electric, efficient: eWIC

The momentum is building for Oregon WIC’s upcoming transition from paper vouchers to an eWIC card! JP Morgan (Oregon’s eWIC banking contractor) has connected with all WIC-authorized stores to make sure they are ready for eWIC - whether in an integrated POS system environment or with stand-beside WIC/SNAP terminals.

Oregon WIC is busy planning for the massive change. New policies, procedures, training, materials, and Administrative Rules are being developed.

This year’s Training WIC Wise covers the rules around transacting vouchers and highlights how things will change in the eWIC environment. Reading about the changes will give store employees a glimpse of how wonderful eWIC will be!

A sneak peek at the Oregon eWIC card design!

Oregon’s eWIC card design and photo were voted on by WIC participants. The winning design was chosen because:

- Waterfalls are Oregon landmarks
- Photo looks like any other bank card
- The word “WIC” is discreet
What is WIC?

WIC teaches good nutrition and provides healthy foods for families.

WIC offers:
- nutrition education classes and health screenings;
- breastfeeding support;
- referrals to other services (immunizations, food banks, Oregon Health Plan, etc.); and
- vouchers (or an eWIC card) for healthy foods.

2012 Oregon WIC facts

- 176,016 Oregon women, infants, and children received services.
- 557 WIC-authorized grocery stores and pharmacies.
- 478 farmers authorized to accept WIC CVVs.
- $69.4 million spent in Oregon grocery stores, pharmacies, farm stands, and farmers’ markets.
- $6.2 million spent on fruit and vegetables.

4/1/2013 WIC Food List - When in doubt, get it out!

The WIC Food List changed April 1, 2013. Recycle all old Food Lists and stock each checkstand with copies of the new Food List in English and Spanish. Changes to the Food List include:

- New authorized brands of soy milk
- New hot and cold cereals
- New flavors and brands of juices
- Wheaties cold cereal is no longer allowed
- Bulk peanut butter, dry beans, and brown rice are no longer allowed

Minor changes were made to the Food List in anticipation of eWIC but will not take effect until then.

- 2 pound packages of cheese will be allowed
- 16 ounce frozen juice will be an option for some participants

Use “Oregon WIC Food” shelf tags under all WIC-approved foods! Once a month, designate someone to make sure tags are still properly placed under all WIC-authorized foods.

National WIC Milestones

- 1972: WIC created as a pilot program
- 1974: WIC permanently established
- 1992: Food package for breastfeeding women expanded
- 2009: Major food package overhaul, including the addition of whole grains, fruit and vegetables, and baby food
- 2020: Deadline for a federal mandate that all WIC Programs will convert to an EBT Card
Voucher Check Out Procedures

1. Ask for the WIC ID Card, make sure there’s at least 1 and no more than 2 signatures, and hold onto it.
2. Check the “First Day to Use” and “Last Day to Use.”
3. Ring up the shopper’s foods, using the WIC Food List as a guide.
4. Say “Yes” to coupons, specials, and store discount cards.
5. Write in the total purchase price in the “Pay Exactly” box.
6. Ask the shopper to sign the voucher and match it with a signature on the WIC ID Card.
7. Give the shopper a receipt and return the WIC ID Card.
8. Stamp your store’s 4-digit WIC Vendor Number on the voucher.

Basic Overview: eWIC check out procedures

1. WIC shopper swipes eWIC card and enters PIN. Depending on the store’s POS system, this might be done at different times in the transaction.
2. Scan the items individually, using the barcode on the product or produce PLU. Integrated POS systems allow a “mixed basket” transaction and will separate out the WIC and non-WIC items. Stand-beside terminals still require a separate transaction for WIC.
3. Press total. WIC balance receipt prints and cashier reviews it with WIC shopper for accuracy. For integrated stores, if there is a split tender, shopper can pay with another form of payment.

The Approved Products List (APL)

A new concept with WIC EBT is the Approved Products List (APL). The APL is an electronic file that contains all WIC-approved UPCs and PLU codes. This file is exchanged with vendors daily and stored in the electronic cash register or stand-beside terminal.

The APL identifies food items scanned at the check stand as WIC or non-WIC items. The WIC Food List will still be an important resource for checkers to troubleshoot problems or explain to a shopper why an item did not ring up as WIC-authorized.

The APL works similarly to current POS systems that identify WIC foods, except the APL is created by the State WIC Program and stores will not have an override feature when an item is missing from the APL.
Formula 101

Ordering off the Authorized Distributor’s list isn’t a store’s only job when it comes to infant formula. Checkers also need to make sure WIC shoppers buy the exact formula listed on the voucher.

1) Read what’s listed on the voucher.
2) Verify that the formula listed on the voucher and the can label match.
   • Quantity
   • Can size
   • Brand
   • Type

Formula purchases post eWIC

When a WIC participant is prescribed formula, the UPC for that specific brand, can size, and type of formula plus number of cans will be loaded on their eWIC card. If the shopper has brought the correct formula to the check stand, the WIC purchase will go through. If the formula is not correct, the WIC purchase will be denied. Checkers can use the description on the receipt and the Formula Reference Guide to help the shopper find the right product.

Pharmacy-specific rules

“Stand-alone” pharmacies (not connected to a grocery store) are authorized by WIC to provide infant, child, and adult formula and medical foods. If your store has an “in-store” pharmacy, WIC shoppers should be referred there to order any formula or medical food not available on the grocery shelf.

Stand-alone and in-store pharmacies are required to follow the same basic rule for WIC.

72-HOUR RULE: Pharmacies are required to obtain formula and medical foods within 72 hours of a participant or WIC Program request.

Stand-alone pharmacies have a second basic rule to follow for WIC.

FORMULA ONLY: Only accept vouchers for formula and medical foods. Vouchers for other foods (milk, cheese, eggs, etc) are not allowed at pharmacies and will not be reimbursed by WIC.

In an eWIC environment, all stores download the same APL. However, for stores classified as pharmacy vendors, only transactions for formula and medical foods will be processed.
Here are some recent real life examples of WIC shopper complaints against stores and tips on how to better handle the situation. Make sure your store is not doing any of these things!

4/24/13: Mom said cashier would not allow them to combine tortillas and bread, cashier said she had to get one or the other.

It is OK for WIC shoppers to combine whole grains (100% whole wheat bread, soft corn tortillas, and/or brown rice) to add up to the amount on the voucher. Always check the Food List to see if different combinations of foods are allowed.

3/25/13: Mom reports cashiers/checkers are rude to WIC customers and act “put out” by WIC transactions.

WIC shoppers deserve the same courtesy and respect given to other shoppers. When a WIC shopper comes through your lane, smile, take your time, and remember that WIC dollars help your store!

2/28/13: Shopper tried to purchase baby food, checker said register blocked it as not WIC-approved. Manager called over to help and he said “I don’t know what to tell you, we can’t accept it.”

POS systems that identify WIC foods are helpful tools. Sometimes WIC-approved items aren’t included in the system by mistake, a new product is on the market, or a UPC has changed. Always check the Food List in these situations and know how to do a system override, if applicable.

2/26/13: Cashier said skim milk is not allowed because the voucher said “fat free” and not “skim.” The term “fat free” includes skim milk as well as skim ultra and skim supreme. When in doubt, check the Food List.

2/14/13: Checker required shopper to sign voucher before ringing up purchase.

Never do this. WIC’s rules require checkers to enter the total on the voucher before asking the shopper to sign. This allows shoppers to verify they are being charged the correct amount.

1/29/13: Cashier would not accept vouchers because client’s name was not added to the top of the (WIC ID) card, even though the card was signed.

A checker’s job is to match the shopper’s signature on the voucher with one of the signatures on the WIC ID Card. Any other matching of names or ID numbers is NOT allowed.

11/15/12: Client reports checker would not allow use of more than 3 vouchers during checkout. Was told to go to back of the line to use any more.

Stores are NOT allowed to limit the number of vouchers accepted at one time from a WIC shopper in a regular check out lane.

Please let the State WIC Office know about issues with WIC shoppers you are not able to resolve, repeat offenders, or shoppers that treat store employees rudely. This gives WIC staff an opportunity to contact a shopper and address problems. Check out our new online complaint form:

Vendor claims

If your store is paid for a WIC voucher that contains a violation affecting the payment amount, the State WIC Office will initiate a claim against your store for reimbursement in the amount of the full purchase price. To avoid vendor claims, ensure all store staff are trained to follow the steps on the Check Out Summary!

Examples include:
- The checker enters the price of a shopper’s non-WIC foods on a WIC voucher;
- The checker enters the price from multiple vouchers on one voucher; or
- The checker charges the WIC Program for items not purchased.

Follow the rules!

Refer to the WIC Vendor Violation Notification and Sanctions form on the web for more information on vendor violations and corresponding sanctions.

Below is a list (# of instances) of the most common vendor violations from 10/1/12 - 3/31/13.

- No violations found (45) - Excellent!
- Substitution of foods (12)
- Failure to witness/compare signature w/WIC ID card (11)
- Accept voucher without WIC ID (11)
- Failure to maintain minimum stock (6)
- Failure to enter purchase price before shopper signs (5)
- Failure to provide a receipt (3)
- Vendor overcharging (2)
- Failure to display prices (2)
- Charging for foods not received by shopper (1)
- Failure to notify WIC of change of owner/closure 30 days prior (1)

Promoting WIC

WIC is a wonderful program that provides healthy food to families and brings money into stores in Oregon communities.

In order to increase business, it is OK to promote WIC in the store. However, please contact the State WIC Office before doing any of the following:
- Offering WIC shoppers incentives that are not available to all shoppers
- Setting up WIC displays
- Using the WIC acronym or logo on any store produced signs (including manufacturer shelf tags)
- Using the WIC acronym or logo in ads
- Using signs outside the store

Keep this and all WIC Wise newsletters and/or WIC notifications in the back of your Vendor Guide to use for later reference.

WIC Program updates and vendor materials can be found directly on our website. http://public.health.oregon.gov/HealthyPeopleFamilies/wic/Pages/vendor.aspx