2014 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 who handle WIC transactions.

WIC’s 40th anniversary
1974 - 2014

WIC then...
- WIC started out serving mothers and babies in Oregon at five local WIC offices in 1974: Washington, Marion, and Lincoln counties, the Valley Migrant League (which would later become Salud Medical Center), and the Maternal Infant Care (MIC) Project.
- In April 1974, Oregon WIC served 2,509 women, infants, and children.
- A typical WIC food package included eggs, milk, cheese, cereal, juice, and infant formula and cereal.

WIC today...
- Oregon WIC serves families in all 36 counties, with clinics operated by 30 local public health agencies, one non-profit, two tribal organizations, and one Head Start.
- In 2013, Oregon WIC served 167,368 women, infants, and children.
- A typical WIC food package includes fruits and vegetables, whole grains, eggs, milk, cheese, peanut butter or dry beans, cereal, and juice. WIC also provides infant cereal; baby food fruits, vegetables, and meats; and formula.
Moving forward with WIC foods

The interim food package rule Oregon WIC called "Fresh Choices" has been finalized by USDA. In addition to the foods changed and added in 2009, the final rule includes additional milk, whole grain, and infant food options. Potatoes, other than sweet potatoes and yams, remain excluded from WIC foods.

New food package rule = upcoming voucher changes in Oregon

Children will now receive an $8 cash value voucher for fruits and vegetables.
- $8 vouchers will begin being issued in July 2014.
- $6 vouchers will be phased out by October 2014.

New milk voucher

- Non-fat and skim mean the same as fat-free, so all are listed.
- Remember, shoppers can only buy the container size and types of milk listed on the voucher.
- Shoppers that want a different container size or type of milk can request a change at the WIC clinic.
WIC Food List - *When in doubt, get it out*

The current WIC Food List is dated April 1, 2013. Now is a good time to restock each check stand with copies of the Food List in English and Spanish.

The WIC Food List is the best tool for knowing exactly what foods WIC shoppers can buy and for handling disputes over allowable foods at the register.

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

Call the State WIC Office at (877) 807-0889 to order more Food Lists and shelf tags or if you’re not sure if a food is eligible.

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**New WIC Food List coming October 2014**

Oregon WIC will be publishing a new Food List in October 2014. The changes will be minor this year and include updating package labels, replacing Hy-Top juices and cereals with Winco, deleting products no longer produced, adding Silk as a soy beverage option, and adding clarifications to some not allowed items.

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**eWIC update**

In 2011, Oregon WIC began work on the large project of transitioning from a paper voucher system to a plastic EBT card. The first step in the project was hiring JP Morgan as the banking contractor for eWIC. In January 2014, JP Morgan announced their withdrawal from pre-paid benefit cards, including Oregon WIC EBT.

Oregon eWIC is still under development. A new banking contractor should be on board by July 2014. Stay tuned for more information!
Understanding WIC ID requirements

Review the points below to clarify your understanding of WIC ID requirements at the store.

1) WIC ID ONLY: The WIC ID Card is the only identification needed for a WIC transaction. Never ask for a drivers license, photo ID, or any other form of identification during a WIC transaction.

2) SHOPPERS CAN BE ANYBODY, ANY AGE: There is not an age requirement for a WIC shopper. Older children or grandparents sometimes do the shopping. As long as the shopper is one of the two signers on the card, it is OK.

3) ONLY MATCH SIGNATURES: It is the cashier’s responsibility to match the signature on the voucher with one of the two signatures on the WIC ID. Do not attempt to match WIC ID numbers or the participant names on the top of the card or voucher. Never turn someone away because names or ID numbers don’t match.

4) HAND WRITTEN OR TYPED ARE OK: Some WIC clinics hand write WIC ID cards; others print them on the computer. Both are acceptable.

Voucher Check Out Procedures

Did you know that all steps listed on the green Check Out Summary are mandatory and must be done in the order listed?

1. Ask for the WIC ID Card, make sure there’s at least one and no more than two signatures, and hold onto it.
2. Check the “First Day to Use” and “Last Day to Use.”
3. Ring up the foods, using the WIC Food List as a guide.
4. Say “yes” to coupons, specials, and store discount cards.
5. Write the 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 (usually done by the bookkeeper).

Pay special attention to these things:
- Ask for the WIC ID first!
- Write the total before getting the shopper’s signature!
- “Pay Exactly” amount cannot exceed the value of a CVV!
- Always give a receipt!
**Pharmacy-specific rules**

Did you know that if your store has an “in-store” pharmacy, WIC shoppers must be referred there to order any infant, child, or adult formula not available on the grocery shelf?

**In-store and stand-alone 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 infant, child, and adult formula. Vouchers for other foods (milk, cheese, eggs, etc.) are not allowed at pharmacies and will not be reimbursed by WIC.

The WIC Formula Reference Guide is available on the WIC website and is a great tool for ensuring WIC participants receive the right formula.

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**Formula Changes**

Oregon WIC has stopped issuing Similac Sensitive for Fussiness & Gas and Similac Total Comfort in powder, concentrate, and ready-to-feed forms. Vouchers for these formulas should be out of circulation by October 2014.

Similac Sensitive for Fussiness & Gas is no longer a minimum stock requirement. The only formula that is a minimum stock requirement is Similac Advance powder.

Similac Advance recently changed their label from Early Shield to OptiGRO. The voucher will continue to say Similac Advance. The Early Shield and OptiGRO labels are both allowed.

Only purchase formula from WIC’s authorized distributor list.
Always make sure WIC shoppers buy the exact formula listed on the voucher.

1) Read the voucher carefully.
2) Verify that the formula listed on the voucher and the can label match.
   - Quantity
   - Can size
   - Brand
   - Type
Compliance Corner

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!

3/5/14: Shopper used voucher for one gallon and one quart of milk. The next time she came in, the cashier said they accidently charged for two gallons of milk during the previous transaction (store received a rejection for amount too high) and asked the shopper to pay the difference. It is a violation of WIC rules to ask a shopper for payment for unpaid or partially paid vouchers. Violations of this type could result in civil money penalties (fines) or a three year disqualification as a WIC vendor.

3/12/14: Cashier would not accept the Similac Advance voucher because it did not say “with iron.” Shopper had to go to another store.
All WIC formulas contain iron. WIC stopped issuing low-iron formulas many years ago and removed the words “with iron” from all vouchers. Please refer to the Formula Reference Guide with questions about voucher wording or allowable formulas.

4/21/14: Cashier refused formula voucher because infant’s name was not listed on the WIC ID card. Manager told shopper to bring in infant’s birth certificate or social security card for proof of ID. It was the last day of the month and shopper left the store without formula for the baby.
The only part of a WIC ID card a cashier should look at is the signature area. Do not try to match participant names or WIC ID numbers. Never refuse a voucher for this reason. Also, never request additional ID from a WIC shopper.

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 Disqualifications from Oregon WIC

Over the past year, several stores have been disqualified from the Oregon WIC Program for a pattern of violations. According to administrative rules, a pattern is defined as three instances. Some violations result in a one year disqualification. More serious violations may result in a three year or permanent disqualification from WIC and a reciprocal disqualification from SNAP.

- Two stores (one large chain store and one owner-operated store) were disqualified for one year for a pattern of substitutions. A substitution is selling unauthorized foods in exchange for a WIC voucher.
- Three stores (two small chain stores and one owner-operated store) were disqualified for one year for a pattern of not meeting WIC minimum stock requirements.
- Three stores (owner-operated stores) were disqualified for three years (with a reciprocal SNAP disqualification) for a pattern of overcharging and charging the WIC program for items not being purchased by the WIC shopper.
New Oregon Administrative Rules (OARs) for vendors took effect December 2013. Stores that commit violations such as not displaying prices, not meeting minimum stock, using the WIC acronym without permission, not attending training, or not giving a receipt may now receive civil penalties (fines). Refer to the WIC Vendor Violation Notification and Sanctions form on the web for more information.

Below is a summary of violations (# of instances) our secret shoppers found from 10/1/13 - 4/30/14.

- No violations found (38) - Excellent!
- Failure to witness/compare signature w/WIC ID card (21)
- Substitution of foods (20)
- Failure to enter purchase price before shopper signs (19)
- Accept voucher without WIC ID (16)
- Failure to provide a receipt (16)
- Vendor overcharging (14)
- Failure to maintain minimum stock (13)
- Charging for foods not received by shopper (4)
- Failure to display prices (2)
- Requiring ID other than WIC ID (2)

**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.

**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, 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

**Did you know...**

Stores are required to give the WIC Program 30 days notice of change of ownership or store closure.

Please remember that WIC authorization and the Vendor ID stamp are not transferable to a new store owner.
Attention bookkeepers:
Stamp all WIC vouchers before depositing

Remember it is a requirement to stamp all WIC vouchers with your store’s 4-digit vendor ID number before depositing them. Keep the following points in mind:

- Make sure stamps are **bold**, **legible**, and in **black ink only**.
- Re-ink, clean, or replace your stamp if it is old or no longer stamping clearly.
- Do not try to stamp over an illegible impression; stamp to the left side of the box instead.
- Stamp vouchers on a flat surface, not on a stack.
- Stamp each voucher!

I have a rejected WIC voucher at my store. What can I do?

Depending on the rejection reason, the voucher might be eligible for reimbursement. First, look for a stamp on the front of the voucher indicating the rejection reason and directions on how to resolve it.

Remember, reimbursement requests for a rejected voucher must be submitted to the State WIC Office within 60 days of the “Last Day to Use” printed on the front of the voucher.

Your request must include:
- An explanation of why the voucher was rejected;
- A reimbursement request amount;
- The original rejected WIC voucher or Image Replacement Document (IRD) from your bank;
- A register receipt or copy of the transaction journal listing what was sold on the WIC voucher; and
- Information about where and to whom to send reimbursement.

Signing up for ACH (Automated Clearing House) will ensure that any voucher eligible for payment is automatically credited to your account and no follow-up is required. Call the State WIC Office to sign up.

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