



Important Dates

- **December 31, 2010:** Last date to use the Spring Food List
- **February 4, 2011** Vendor Teleconference

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

“WIC” stands for the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children. The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) funds this program throughout the US to provide supplemental foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support, and referral to health care to pregnant, post partum, and breastfeeding women; infants and children age 0 to five years who are low income and have nutritional risk.

The Program is designed to prevent health problems and to promote healthy habits for life-long health and well-being. WIC supplemental foods are excellent sources of vitamins and minerals, fiber, and lower in fat content.

FOOD PACKAGE CHANGES AND CLARIFICATIONS

General Mills Cheerios plain and whole grain have been removed from the food list due to cost constraints. Though the product was listed on the minimum stock, it is not listed on the colored food lists.

Powder milk—All vendors are required to stock 9—8 quart size boxes and 6—3 quart size boxes of powder milk. Call your distributor if it does not appear on their order form. Failure to stock both types is a stocking violation subject to sanction points.

Kix—Due to client demand you may sell both Whole Grain Kix and Whole Grain Honey Kix. Both products are listed on page 3 of the minimum stock price sheet and appear on the food lists.

Tortillas – Two brands were not listed on the colored food lists, but appear in the minimum stock price list. These newly approved tortillas are Cantina Classica Corn Tortillas 16 oz. and Taco Loco Corn Tortillas 10 oz.

Lactose free milk—**Quart Sizes have been removed from the minimum stock requirement!** Vendors will need to carry the 1/2 gallon size with a total of 3 gallons for Group A, 6 gallons for group B and 12 gallons for group C. Vendors should transition to the half gallon sizes when they place their next order and should discontinue quart sizes altogether by March 1, 2011.

Inside this issue

Important Dates	1
The Purpose of the Program	1
Food Package Changes and Clarifications	1
Frequently Asked Questions	2
Minimum Stock Requirements	2
Why are Price Sheets Important?	2

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. How do I get vendor information from the Internet?

A. Go to: <http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dpa/programs/nutri/wic/Vendors/default.htm>

Vendors will find the minimum stock requirements, colored food lists, banking forms, and more.

Q. Why does the State of Alaska collect price sheets twice a year?

A. This is a USDA requirement to ensure WIC clients have access to all foods on their warrants. Vendors must keep required inventory at all times, not only during the price sheet collection periods.

Q. Why is my store undergoing an inventory audit?

A. Vendor invoices/purchase orders are evidence that shows that the vendor has in stock or has ordered required WIC food items so that they are available to WIC participants. If the vendor's price sheets showed missing food items, the State may "audit" that vendor to see if they carry the correct amounts of foods for all participants in their area. An inventory audit would also show if the vendor purchases infant formula only from entities on the "List of Authorized Suppliers of Infant Formula." Vendors who fail an inventory audit are subjected to sanction points.

TIPS

- Keep a copy of your price sheet before submitting it to the State. Most fax machines can also make copies.
- To request an exemption, complete the "Exemption Request" form (available online) and submit it to your local agency staff. They will approve/disapprove the request and notify the State WIC Program Office of their decision. Marking an "X" on the "Fresh Milk" box of your Minimum Stock Inventory form does not constitute approval of an exemption request.

Minimum Stock Requirements for WIC Foods

All stores that are approved as WIC vendors sign an agreement that they will carry the required minimum stock of WIC foods at all times. This is important since WIC is a nutrition program and participants must be able to buy the foods prescribed for their nutrition needs.

Minimum stock requirements are based upon a minimum level of participants; if there is a higher number of participants in an area, WIC vendor(s) may need to carry more stock to meet the demand for WIC items.

Vendors may be assessed penalty points if they do not have the required minimum stock of WIC foods.

Why are Price Sheets Important?

Federal regulations require WIC to consider the prices charged by vendors as one of the criteria for selecting and authorizing vendors. Price limitations are established so that the State agency does not pay a vendor at a level that would make it ineligible for authorization. WIC uses shelf prices reported by vendors as one of the tools for setting price limitation criteria. Price limitations are established for each peer group. This enables us to screen warrants to detect those that exceed the "not-to-exceed" limits and follow-up with those vendors. Failure to remain price-competitive is cause for termination of the vendor agreement.

NEW TRAINING CDs ENCLOSED!

Use the enclosed CDs to train your cashiers:

- **How to Accept Fruit & Vegetable Vouchers**
- **How to Correctly Accept and Process WIC Warrants**