

Welcome to WIC

Your Guide to Benefits and Services



Maryland WIC

Better Nutrition Brighter Future

Welcome to the Maryland Women, Infants and Children (WIC) program! We hope you enjoy everything that WIC has to offer.

Our goal is to help you and your family eat better, grow better and make your experience with WIC the best that it can be.

WIC gives more than just food. We give tips on shopping, cooking and eating well, and connect you with other health and wellness services.

Please let us know if you have a question or if there is something we can help you with.

Again, welcome to the program!

Your Friends at WIC



How Long Am I Eligible For WIC?

WIC eligibility is different for women than it is for children.

Women are eligible:

- Your entire pregnancy and up to 6 weeks after pregnancy.
- Up to one year after your baby's birth if you breastfeed.
- Up to 6 months after your baby's birth if you do not breastfeed.

Children are eligible:

- From birth, up to age 5.

You and your child will need to re-apply for WIC about once a year, and after you have your baby. When you re-apply you will need to bring proof of income, proof of residency, and, if pregnant, proof of pregnancy. Staff will let you know when you need to bring these items with you.

Your Health Is Important

WIC staff will ask about your health and eating habits, measure your weight, and check your iron level. By talking with WIC staff, you can learn where to get care while you are pregnant, information for other food resources, or shots (immunizations) for your child. You can also get breastfeeding support and other tips to improve the health of you and your baby. Be sure to ask your own questions too.



Your WIC Appointments

You will need to return to WIC about every 3 months to get your benefits. Your child will need to come with you about every 6 months to be weighed and measured. Your WIC appointment date and time is on your **Shopping List**, your **WIC ID Folder** (if used by your local WIC Program), and your appointment reminder notice. Always bring your identification **OR** your **ID Folder** to **ALL** WIC appointments.

If you cannot keep an appointment, be sure to call WIC to reschedule it.

If you pick up your benefits late, you may get less food. If you stop picking up benefits, you may be dropped from WIC and will need to re-apply.

Nutrition is a part of most WIC appointments. That is because WIC's goal is to help you and your family enjoy better health through healthy foods. You may be able to receive your nutrition education on-line. Your local WIC office will let you know.



Your Proxy and Your Designee

You can authorize up to 2 people to help you with your WIC appointments. At WIC, they can be either a proxy or a designee:

A **proxy** can pick up your WIC benefits and shop for your WIC foods if you are not able to; a **designee** can do all of that plus they can bring your child in to appointments to re-apply

for the program when needed. You must give WIC the names of your proxies or designees. If you want to change your proxy or designee, you must call WIC to let us know.



Your proxy or designee must follow the same rules as you to pick up and spend WIC benefits. Let them read this booklet. Have them shop with you. Ask them to bring back information from all WIC visits.

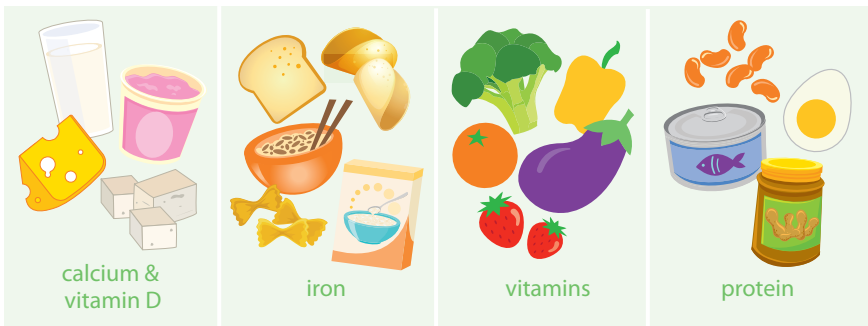
Your designee must be able to answer questions about your income, your child's health, medical history, and know what they eat. This should be someone who can answer these questions for you.

WIC Food Benefits

Each person in your family on WIC will be given healthy foods for each month they are on the program.

WIC foods are packed with nutrients like:

- **Calcium** and **vitamin D** for strong bones
- **Iron** for healthy blood
- **Vitamins** to fight illnesses
- **Protein** to build muscles and organs



WIC foods are also low in sugar and fat.

WIC foods are for you or your child only. They help you get what you need to stay healthy. **You will still need to buy other foods.** WIC foods are meant to add to what you already eat.

When money is tight, it is hard to eat the way you should. WIC can give you tips to get the most food value for your money. You can also get ideas for quick and low cost meals and snacks.

If your WIC foods are damaged or destroyed in a fire or natural disaster, let your local WIC office know. They may be able to replace them.

Your eWIC Account

WIC food benefits that are given to your family are loaded to your eWIC account once a month. Your food benefits will be available for purchase on the same start and end date each month. Your benefits become available on the **Benefit Start Date** at 12:01 a.m. and end at 11:59 p.m. on the **Benefit End Date**. Benefits that have not been spent **DO NOT** carry over to the next month.

To access your WIC food benefits in your account, you are given an eWIC card.

Your eWIC Card

Your **Maryland eWIC Card** is what you take to the grocery store to purchase your WIC foods. Before you use your Maryland eWIC card, you must select a 4-digit Personal Identification Number (PIN.)



- Choose a number that is easy for you to remember, but hard for others to guess.
- Do not write your PIN on your eWIC card.
- Only share your PIN with your proxy or your designee.

Only
you and your
proxy/designee
should know
your PIN.

You can select or change your PIN by calling eWIC Customer Service at 1-844-309-6097 **OR** logging on to www.mybnft.com and entering your 16-digit eWIC card number.

If someone gets your eWIC card and knows your PIN, they could use your food benefits. Those benefits will **NOT** be replaced. To protect your card:

- Keep your card in a safe place, like your wallet or purse.
- Keep your card clean and out of direct sunlight.
- Keep your card away from magnets and electronics like cell phones.

Your WIC Shopping List and WIC Authorized Foods List

Your **WIC Shopping List** shows all the WIC foods given to your family. It lists who the foods are for, the amount of each food item, and the benefit start and end dates. The Shopping List may also include the date of your next WIC appointment. It is printed and given to you at the end of your WIC appointment.

The **WIC Authorized Foods List** gives you details of what you can and cannot buy. Some WIC foods, like cereal, are brand and size specific. You will find that information in your Foods List. Before shopping the first time, review your Shopping List along with your Foods List. The more you know about WIC foods, the easier it is to shop. Take your Shopping List and the WIC Foods List to the store. If you have a question, ask the store's customer service representative or give your local WIC office a call.



Maryland WIC Mobile App

For smart phone users, the **Maryland WIC Mobile App** can be very helpful to WIC families. You can download the App, MD WIC, from the Google Play or iPhone stores. To register, you just need an active **Maryland eWIC Card**.

You can view information about your WIC appointments, WIC offices, approved store locations, the foods list and your food benefit balance. While shopping, you can scan a UPC (Barcode) to see if the food item is WIC approved and available in your WIC food balance. You can also receive alerts for upcoming appointments and benefits about to expire.



The Maryland WIC Mobile App can help you access other WIC resources and has links to other services. The app is available in English and Spanish. Ask WIC staff about this helpful tool.

Available on the iPhone
App Store



ANDROID APP ON
Google Play



Use this QR code to download the Maryland WIC Mobile App or visit the Google Play or iPhone App store.

How to Shop for WIC Foods

You should have a list of approved WIC vendors (stores) in your area. You can also use the mobile WIC App to find a store near you, whether home or shopping out of your area, or call your local WIC office and they can help you find one. All approved WIC stores will display the **Maryland eWIC Accepted Here** sign in their window.



You can shop for your WIC foods as often as you like. You do not have to buy all your foods at one time. Take your **eWIC Card**, your **Shopping List** and your **Foods List** to a WIC approved store.

Here are the steps to follow:

1. Decide what foods on your **Shopping List** you want to buy. Look at the dates. You can only buy foods listed between the food benefit **Start and End Dates** listed on your Shopping List.
2. Use your WIC **Foods List** to check which foods are allowed or you can scan the UPC using the **Maryland WIC App**.
3. Use any checkout lane **but not** cash only, express, or self-checkout. Some stores may only take eWIC in one lane, if so, the lane will be marked with a smaller **eWIC Accepted Here** sign.
4. At some stores, you can purchase WIC foods and non-WIC foods in the same transaction. This is called a "mixed basket." However, if you find it helpful, you can separate WIC foods to make your WIC purchase easier.
5. You may want to let the cashier know you are using WIC. At some stores you need to slide your **eWIC Card** before they ring up your WIC food.
6. Enter your 4-digit PIN when asked. No signature or ID is required.
7. Keep your receipt, it shows your remaining benefit balance.

Helpful Tips for Using Your WIC Benefits

If you lose or damage your eWIC Card, it can be replaced.

- Call Customer Service at **1-844-309-6097** to request a new card.
- Remember that any benefits that expire while waiting for your new card to arrive cannot be replaced.
- It can take up to 7 business days to get a new card in the mail. If you do not receive your replacement card within 7 days, call your local WIC office.

You have many options for keeping track of the food you have left in your eWIC account. To check your food balance, you can:

- Use the free **Maryland WIC App** on your smart phone. You can access your account from your smart phone and see your balance while you are shopping.
- Set up an account at **www.mybnft.com** to check your balance online.
- Check your most recent store receipt.
- Call Customer Service at **1-844-309-6097**. They will read your balance to you over the phone.
- Ask a cashier or staff member at the customer service desk to run a “balance inquiry” for you before you start shopping.
- Visit the WIC office and ask for an updated shopping list.



Remember your PIN. If you enter the wrong PIN 4 times in a row, your card will be locked until midnight.

- To re-set or change your PIN, you can call **1-844-309-6097** or go to **www.mybnft.com**.

Helpful Tips (continued)

If you owe money at the end of your WIC transaction, here are some reasons why that might happen:

- You may be spending more in fruits and vegetables than the amount that WIC gives you.
- You may not have enough balance left on your account for the item you are trying to buy.
- You may be trying to buy a WIC food that is not on your **WIC Shopping List**.
- A food you are trying to buy is not a WIC approved item.



You can shop for your WIC foods as often as you would like during the month. You do not have to buy all of your foods at one time.

You can use coupons, “buy one get one free,” and store discount cards for your WIC foods. This saves money for the WIC Program; no money will be given to you when you use coupons with your WIC benefits. If a retailer offers “buy one get one free,” participants can take advantage of the extra item using WIC. Some “buy one get one free” offers may charge half price for each item. This will NOT be WIC approved. Make sure you read the fine print.

Stores may not carry all brands you see on the Foods List. You can ask the store to carry the brand you want or shop at another store.

Stores cannot give you a rain check or credit for any food or formula not in stock.

Stores cannot let you purchase a food that is not WIC approved.

If you think a food you tried to buy should be WIC approved, please call your local WIC office with the information below:

- The UPC (barcode) from the item. Please give the WIC staff member all of the numbers, even the ones right before or right after the barcode.
 - Exact name of the item you tried to buy and the size of the package.
 - You can also submit this information using the **Maryland WIC App**.
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If you need to dispute a transaction you may:

- Call Customer Service at **1-844-309-6097**.
 - Go to **www.mybnft.com**.
 - Remember that you can only dispute transactions for the current month. You are not able to dispute transactions for benefits that have expired.
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Your Rights and Your Responsibilities

When you applied for WIC, you signed confirming that you were given the opportunity to read, or have read to you, your **Rights and Responsibilities**. Federal law requires that we share that information with you. A copy was given to you when you applied. Take a few minutes to read your rights, and your responsibilities again. It is important for you to know what your rights are. You have the right to be treated fairly, with common courtesy, and receive the information you need. You also have the responsibility to follow program rules. If you do not follow the rules, you may be removed from the program, owe us money, or face criminal charges, and we do not want to see that happen.

If you need help:

- For questions about your **eWIC Card**, call Customer Service at **1-844-309-6097** or log on to **www.mybnft.com**.
- For questions about your **WIC food benefits**, or if you move or change your address, please contact your local WIC office.
- For other information about the **Maryland WIC Program**, call **1-800-242-4942** or visit the website at **www.mdwic.org**.

Other Programs You May Qualify For

As a WIC participant you may also be eligible for other programs that help with things like food, medical care, alcohol, drug or mental health crisis services, electric and other utility bills, and school readiness. Use the contact information listed below or ask WIC staff if you need help finding assistance in your area.

- Maryland Food Supplement Program (SNAP), Temporary Cash Assistance (TCA) or Energy Assistance call **1-800-332-6347** or visit **myDHRbenefits.dhr.state.md.us**;
- Maryland Medical Assistance call **1-855-642-8572** or visit **www.marylandhealthconnection.gov**;

- Head Start or Early Head Start call **1-866-763-6481** to find a location near you;
- Maryland Crisis Hotline call **1-800-422-0009**.

Moving?

Please let your local WIC office know if you are moving. If you stay in Maryland, you can ask to transfer to another WIC office. If you move out of state, ask for a VOC (Verification of Certification) form to take to another WIC Program. You can only be in one WIC Program at a time.

We Would Like to Hear From You

We work hard to make your experience with WIC the best that it can be. If you have an idea of how we can make it better, or a story to share of how WIC helped you, please let us know.

If you have a complaint about a vendor or cashier, or your clinic visit, we would like to know that too.

You have many ways to contact us. You can:

- Call your local WIC Office
- Call the State WIC Office at **1-800-242-4WIC**
- Visit the Contact WIC page on our website: **www.mdwic.org**
- Email us at **mdh.wic@maryland.gov**



Thank you
for allowing us
to be a part of
your family's
future.

MarylandWIC

Better Nutrition Brighter Future

1-800-242-4942 | www.mdwic.org



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Persons with disabilities who require alternative means of communication for program information (e.g. Braille, large print, audiotape, American Sign Language, etc.), should contact the Agency (State or local) where they applied for benefits. Individuals who are deaf, hard of hearing or have speech disabilities may contact USDA through the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339. Additionally, program information may be made available in languages other than English.

To file a program complaint of discrimination, complete the [USDA Program Discrimination Complaint Form](http://www.ascrusda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html), (AD-3027) found online at: http://www.ascrusda.gov/complaint_filing_cust.html, and at any USDA office, or write a letter addressed to USDA and provide in the letter all of the information requested in the form. To request a copy of the complaint form, call (866) 632-9992. Submit your completed form or letter to USDA by:

- (1) mail: U.S. Department of Agriculture
Office of the Assistant Secretary for Civil Rights
1400 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, D.C. 20250-9410;
- (2) fax: (202) 690-7442; or
- (3) email: program.intake@usda.gov.

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