

**Virginia WIC Program  
Allowable Foods and Other Program Changes (2009)  
Submitted Questions and Responses**

<b>Grouping:</b>	<b>Q/R</b>	<b>Description:</b>
<b>A. RSMS</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<i>I have one private label milk supplier for my gallon size milk and a different supplier for quarts. What should I do?</i>
	<b>Response:</b>	RSMS will be updated to allow stores to declare one designated brand for gallon milk (all types) and one for quart (all types) milk size. For instance, both the whole fluid and reduced fat milk products for the gallon size can be one brand. The quart size supplier for whole fluid and reduced fat milk can be a different private label brand. It is important that authorized stores use a “WIC designated brand” shelf label for each of the milk products that will be sold to participants.
	<b>Question:</b>	<i>I did not see fresh fruits and vegetables listed in RSMS?</i>
	<b>Response:</b>	Currently the Program is not collecting unit prices in RSMS for either canned/fresh fruits or vegetables. These items are only sold using cash value vouchers which have a set dollar limited assigned to them.
<b>B. WIC Designated Brand Shelf Labels</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<i>We have the “VA WIC Designated” brand labels for the items that are designated. Can we use these same labels to point out the other items that are specific to WIC, such as the rice, bread, and tuna?</i>
	<b>Response:</b>	The WIC Program recommends that you only use the “VA WIC Designated” shelf labels under the products that are subject to this restriction. All stores are expected to ensure these labels are placed under the right products. So the fewer labels you have to monitor for correct placement will minimize the amount of time spent to correct shelf labels being misplaced.
<b>C. Training of WIC Participants</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<i>I am concerned that WIC customers have not been properly trained as to how to use the new food instruments. Is future training scheduled for these consumers? Being brand new to us as well, I am not sure how we are going to be able to answer all their questions. Help!</i>
	<b>Response:</b>	Many things have been done to provide training to WIC participants, including but not limited to: updated the VA Gets Orientated DVD with two new chapters, entitled “Using your WIC Food Instrument” and “Using your Cash Value Voucher”; updated the Participant Handbook; created and distributed new educational tools ( <i>How to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables</i> ); developed and distributed new tear off pads re: <i>Shopping for Store Designated</i> brands; held numerous nutrition education classes; distribution of other handouts (Food List, Summary of Food Changes) etc. Additionally, numerous mandatory training sessions have been held for all WIC staff over the past 4-5 months. The WIC Program will continue working with participants over the next year to ensure they

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		<p>understand the allowable food package changes.</p> <p>Please contact your assigned Vendor Liaison or the state WIC office and provide them the agency code which appears on the WIC food instrument, if there are specific local agencies whose participants' consistently say they did not receive any of the training offered by the WIC Program.</p>
<b>D. Baby Food</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>When will retailers receive notice of the baby food rebate contact and the specific brand allowed by the Program?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	The Virginia WIC Program has decided not to participate in the multi-state baby food rebate contract. Therefore, Virginia WIC participants will be allowed to purchase "any brand" of baby food in the quantity and container size specified on the food instrument. The Virginia WIC Program food instruments will not state or require a specific baby food brand name to be purchased by participants.
	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Will stores be required to enforce participants purchasing the entire quantity of baby foods prescribed on their food instruments??</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	Stores should encourage participants to purchase all of the baby food prescribed on their food instruments...but you are not expected to force them to purchase everything. Participants can decline the baby foods prescribed on their food instruments.
	<b>Question:</b>	When a customer has a WIC food instrument for baby foods, how many jars does it usually allow on the check?
	<b>Response:</b>	Typically the number of containers of baby foods will be 16. However, some participants may be received a lesser quantity, depending upon when they became certified to receive WIC benefits.
	<b>Question:</b>	Our main office had a question about baby food on the new WIC food list. They were keying in the correct items and were unsure about which baby foods would be allowed (stage 1 or stage 2)?
	<b>Response:</b>	Both types of baby food stages are allowed.
<b>E. Baby Formula</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Will a minimum stocking requirement exist for the Similac Sensitive contract formula? If yes, what is it?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	Over time the WIC Program will phase out prescribing the Isomil formula and issue Similac Sensitive instead. Stores will notice the demand for Similac Sensitive increasing over the next several months. Stores are encouraged to stock this type of contract formula based upon the demand for this product. Once an administrative decision is made to stop issuing Isomil formula, then retailers will be advised of this change.

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<b>F. Cold &amp; Hot Cereals</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>What are the allowed sizes for cereal?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	The allowed packaged size for cold cereal is 12 ounces or larger (up to 36 ounces). Hot cereal packaged size is 11.8 ounces or larger. Please refer to the Minimum Stocking requirement which identifies the specific package sizes and variety of cereals that are required.
	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Do WIC participants have to buy exactly 36 ounces of cereal?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	A combination of the allowed packages sizes (12 ounces or larger) may be purchased for a total weight of 36 ounces. Refer to the 2009 food list for a diagram of suggested ways to buy cereal. Stores should encourage participants to purchase 36 ounces of the cold and hot cereal prescribed on their food instruments...but you are not expected to force them to purchase the entire amount.
	<b>Question:</b>	We are unable to get a 12 ounce package of Richfood Corn Flakes. The only size offered is 18 ounces, which we carry. I did not list a price in RSMS for corn flakes since we do not have the 12-15 ounce package. Is this the correct way to handle?
	<b>Response:</b>	Yes...in RSMS you should only provide the price for the size specified. Please refer to the Minimum Stocking Requirement guidelines which identify you must sell at least 3 different types of cereals in the size specified in order to comply with this Program requirement.
<b>G. CVVs Fruits &amp; Vegetables</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>What sizes are allowed for the canned fruits and vegetables?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	There are no required minimum or maximum sizes for canned fruits and vegetables. The allowable size depends upon the dollar amount state on the cash value voucher (CVV).
	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Is there a listing or any breakdown which might help in determining which types of beans are eligible to be purchased using CVVs?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	No listing exists. The following are example of beans that are allowed for purchase, including but not limited to: wax beans, green beans, string beans. See section labeled “J” for additional questions about allowable fruits and vegetables. If you are unsure if a specific fruit or vegetable is allowed, contact your assigned Vendor Liaison or the state WIC office.

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<b>Grouping:</b>	<b>Q/R</b>	<b>Description:</b>
<b>H. Milk</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>If a store's designated brand of milk is not available can I sell the next least expensive brand available?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	No. Retail stores must sell only the declared designated brand of milk. Selling a brand that is different than what has been declared in RSMS is considered an ineligible product substitution and will be subject to sanctions, if this type of Program violation is documented.
	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Why are stores not allowed to sell WIC participants any brand of milk when out of their designated brand?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	The WIC Program can better inform participants of their shopping choices based upon the information stored in RSMS pertaining to a store's designated brands. Unique performance requirements exist for retailers in selling designated brands. It is a USDA requirement to have a clear and consistent method in place to inform participants of their shopping choices. This outcome is achieved by using designated brands and mandatory shelf labels on these products.
<b>I. Peanut Butter</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Peanut Butter is listed as 18 ounce What if my private label goes to a 16 ounce?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	Presently no plans exist to change the packaging size of peanut butter. If your current private label supplier downsizes then you will have to obtain another manufacturer as your designated brand for your peanut butter. We will continue to monitor the availability of peanut butter in the required 18 ounce size and take appropriate action if circumstances warrant a change to our existing size restriction.
<b>J. Single Flavored Juice</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>We currently have 64 ounce bottles of juice and 46 ounce cans of juice. Are we going to be ok with that offering?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	The only allowable sizes of juice are 64 ounces (liquid) and 12 ounces (frozen), depending upon what has been prescribed on the WIC FI. No 46 ounces containers of juice are allowed.

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<b>Grouping</b>	<b>Q/R</b>	<b>Description:</b>
<b>K. Whole Grain Products</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Can a retailer sell 14 ounce brown rice if 16 ounce is not available?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	No...Brown rice must be 16 ounces. A smaller package size is not allowed. It is not a requirement for stores to sell brown rice. You are required to sell at least one of the Whole Grain products. Stores can sell 16 ounces products only of either Whole Wheat bread or 16 ounces corn tortillas (see the selective brands that are approved on the Food list) or 16 ounce package of brown rice.
		<b><i>My concern is the availability of 16 ounce bread?</i></b>
		Stores are not required to sell a 16 ounce whole wheat bread product. Retail stores are required to sell one Whole Grain Product in order to meet the minimum stocking requirement. Retailers should work with their suppliers to obtain the desired package sizes, since it is anticipated that the demand for these products in the 16 ounce size will significantly increase.
	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>What are the three brands of Whole Grain Corn Tortillas?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	Best Choice, La Burrita and Don Pancho.
	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>I just need some clarification from you concerning the tortillas that are “wicable”. Can the tortillas be wheat or do they just have to be corn tortillas?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	Only the specific corn tortilla brands that are listed on the food list are allowed. All of these brands are corn tortillas.
<b>L. Sanctions</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Will sanctions be issued if a store allows participants to purchase products that have not been designated as their “store brand” in RSMS?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	Stores that mistakenly sell a non designated brand to WIC participants will be given a written warning, if this type of violation is documented this year (October 1 – December 31, 2009). Beginning January 1, 2010, if this type of violation is documented during a compliance investigation, then a store will be issued sanctions.
<b>M. New Minimum Stocking Requirement</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Will there be any grace period for stores being expected to meet the new minimum stocking requirement?</i></b>
	<b>Response:</b>	No. All stores are expected to exceed the new minimum stocking requirement as of October 1, 2009. The minimum stocking requirement has been significantly reduced from the prior standard, so stores should be able to immediately meet these new performance standards.
<b>N. Miscellaneous</b>	<b>Question:</b>	<b><i>Is there was any kind of grace period where a WIC customer could use an older food instrument voucher to still purchase items from the old food list?</i></b>

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	<b>Response:</b>	There is no grace period, as of October 1, 2009 stores must sell the specific products that are listed on the new food list. The only exception to this statement is if the food instrument specifically prescribes a product that has been discontinued, i.e., 46 ounce liquid juice. However, these type of food instruments will be an exception and only be used during the month of October.
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**Specific Food Questions:**

<b>Grouping:</b>	<b>Is this Food item Allowed?</b>	<b>Allowed/ Not Allowed</b>
<b>O. Fruit/Vegetables Cash Value Vouchers</b>	Bagged salads that include croutons, seasoning and/or dressing.	NO
	Candy apples	NO
	Canned vegetables that contain beans, i.e., Succotash.	NO
	Chick peas	NO
	Canned fruit cocktail with sugar or no sugar added	NO
	Canned pimentos	YES
	Organic canned/fresh fruits and vegetables	YES
	Lime or lemon juice concentrate	NO
	Peas and carrots, string beans and pearl onions (combination of single ingredient vegetables)	YES
	Pimentos (dried)	NO
	Prepackaged cut up fresh fruits/vegetables	YES
	Pumpkins without decorations, or ornamental and decorative pumpkins	NO
	Single or individual serving size canned vegetables/fruits	NO
	Single or individual serving size canned vegetable/fruits – sold in multi-packs	NO
	Sauerkraut (canned)	NO
White sweet potatoes or white yams	NO	

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<b>Grouping:</b>	<b>Is this Food item Allowed?</b>	<b>Allowed/ Not Allowed</b>
<b>P. Cheese</b>	Mozzarella cheese balls.\	NO
<b>Q. Single Flavor Juice</b>	Cranberry Juice or Cranberry Juice Cocktail, White Cranberry Cocktail Juice (64 ounces) - must be 100% juice.	YES
	Cran-Grape, Cran-Apple, Cran Raspberry and other blends.	NO
	White Grape juice (64 ounces)	YES
<b>R. Whole Grain<sup>1</sup> Products</b>	Nature's Own Multi Grain Bread (16 ounces)	NO
	Weight Watchers 100% Whole Wheat Bread (16 ounces)	NO
	Nature's Own Sugar Free Bread (16 ounces)	YES
	Wonder Whole Wheat Bread (16 ounces)	NO

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<sup>1</sup> For Whole Grain Products - only the specific product names stated on the WIC Approved Food List can be sold to eligible participants.