

WIC Vendor Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Must a WIC Card be *physically* present during all WIC transactions?

Yes. The WIC Vendor Agreement and regulations specify that **a physical card must be present and swiped for all WIC transactions.**

- Vendors may process California WIC Card transactions only when a shopper presents the WIC Card at the time of purchase.
- WIC Card numbers may only be key-entered by the cashier after a magnetic swipe read has failed.
- Vendors may not accept any other forms of the WIC Card, such as photos of the WIC Card or information from the WIC App.

Can a WIC shopper purchase WIC food items if they *do not know their PIN*?

No. If a WIC shopper forgets their PIN, direct them to the phone number or website on the back of their WIC Card for help. If a WIC shopper enters the PIN incorrectly four (4) times, the WIC Card will be locked, and they will need to call the phone number on the back of their WIC Card to unlock it. Vendors may never enter the PIN on behalf of the shopper, nor collect the PIN.

What if a WIC shopper *forgets their WIC Card at my store*?

If a California WIC Card is found, vendors must return the card within seven (7) days to the address printed on the back of the card.

Must WIC shoppers *buy all of their WIC foods in one trip with the WIC Card*?

No. Shoppers may purchase as many (or as few) of their WIC foods as they want as long as the selected item is in the APL and benefits are available on their WIC Card.

- WIC food benefits for a household are combined on one card.
- WIC shoppers use the same card month after month.
- Food benefits are good for 30 days, then expire. Benefits do not carryover.

What to do if a WIC shopper *cannot buy their food at the store*?

If a shopper has questions or problems buying their WIC foods at the store, share these directions with them:

Call the Participant Support Line at **1-800-852-5770** and/or email WIC@cdph.ca.gov and have this information ready:

- WIC Card number
- Store location (name, city, street)
- Approximate day and time of visit
- Product description (brand, size, and UPC)
- Details of what happened

Additional Tip: Shoppers can use their phone to take a picture of the front and back label, nutrition facts panel, ingredients, and UPC/Barcode of the food item they were unable to purchase.



California Department of Public Health, California WIC program

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