



MARYLAND

BETTER NUTRITION, BRIGHTER FUTURE

VENDOR NEWSLETTER

INFANT FORMULA RECALL

On February 17, 2022, Abbott Nutrition, the manufacturer of Similac products, announced a voluntary recall on select lots of **Similac, Alimentum,** and **Elecare** formulas that were manufactured at the Abbott facility in Sturgis, Michigan. On February 28th, the recall was expanded to include **Similac PM 60/40**. The State WIC office sent guidance to all stores on February 21st instructing that returns/exchanges of the recalled formula should be handled the same way for all customers, including WIC customers. To see the guidance in its entirety, please visit the [Important Notices & Vendor Updates](#) section of our website.

WIC clinics have been issuing alternate formulas and will continue to do so until the Similac recall and shortages are resolved. We can't thank our vendors enough for working with us through this unprecedented event to keep Maryland infants fed.



ONGOING SUPPLY CHAIN AND STOCKING ISSUES

We are over 2 years into the COVID-19 Pandemic, and many stores continue to have trouble stocking their shelves. Stores order products to fill the shelves but never really know what they will actually receive until the truck arrives. Some stores are so short-staffed that they don't have the manpower to unload the trucks and stock the shelves.

The Maryland WIC Program will continue to monitor stores during these trying times so that we can assess in-store stock conditions. Federal regulations require stores to stock at a minimum, two different fruits, two different vegetables, and at least one whole grain cereal. Since the country is still in a state of emergency, we will not issue violations/sanctions for stores unable to meet Maryland's Required Minimum Stock as long as the federal minimum stocking requirements are met.

INFANT FORMULA SUPPLIER DIRECTORY

Federal and State WIC regulations state that vendors may only purchase infant formula and medical foods from a supplier, distributor, or manufacturer authorized by the state WIC office. The Authorized Maryland Infant Formula and Medical Foods Supplier Directory has recently been updated and includes two new authorized suppliers: Omnipresence Foods in Jessup, MD and M & T Distributors in Capitol Heights, MD. The updated directory can be found in the [Vendor Resource Library](#) on our website at mdwic.org.

ALERT! BUSINESS EMAIL ADDRESSES REQUIRED!

All vendors must maintain an active email account that is monitored no less than once a week and capable of receiving WIC contract and program information. Maryland WIC sends all vendor communications via email, so it is important to check your email regularly for program and policy updates. If your business or primary contact email changes, please let us know immediately so that we can update it in our system.

CONGRESS EXTENDS THE WIC FRUIT & VEGETABLE BENEFIT INCREASE

Since April 2021, WIC participants have received an increase in their fruit and vegetable benefits. Congress has approved a continuing resolution that will extend the increase until September 30, 2022. Children will receive \$24, pregnant women will receive \$43, and breastfeeding moms will receive \$47. Stores should expect to continue to see an increased demand for fresh, frozen, and canned fruits and vegetables through September 2022.

PLU #4469 NOW #44691

As a reminder, all vendors that use the PLU #4469 for fresh fruit and vegetable transactions should now be using PLU #44691. Vendors with integrated software should also make sure that they map fresh fruit and vegetable store generated UPCs and PLUs to #44691. Remember that all canned, frozen, and prepackaged produce with a standard UPC must be scanned individually. PLU #44691 is only used for fresh produce. This will ensure that only WIC approved produce is bought with WIC benefits.



2021 AUTHORIZED FOODS LIST

The Maryland WIC Program released our new Authorized Foods List effective October 1, 2021. The Authorized Foods List is still in the process of being printed. We will notify you when supplies are delivered to our warehouse. In turn, we will mail a supply to each store. An electronic version of the Authorized Foods List is available at [this link](#). Thanks for your patience.

WIC APPROVED SHELF TAGS

WIC approved shelf tags are not required, but they are encouraged. Our participants find that the shelf tags help them tremendously and prevent embarrassment and frustration at the register. We encourage participants to use the scanning feature of the Maryland WIC participant app, but not everyone has access to a smart phone and cell service is sometimes limited within a store.

With prior approval by the state WIC office, we allow vendors with multiple locations to print "WIC" on their shelf tags. If you are a large chain and have multiple stores, we encourage you to do so. Most find it convenient to align their WIC approved shelf tags with the APL. Please contact our office for more information as we have strict guidelines surrounding the use of the WIC logo.

The state WIC office can provide your store with a supply of shelf tags. If you need any supplies, please use the Vendor Supply Request Form under the Vendor Resource Library in the vendor section of our website. We are more than happy to send you what you need.



HOW TO CONTACT US

The State Office are still teleworking full time. Please use the following email address to contact the Vendor Operations Unit:
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FOR MORE INFORMATION

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