

Maximizing Your WIC and SNAP Benefits



Do you ever run out of food and do not have money to buy more?
Is your family struggling to buy healthy foods?
Is your household income at or below 185% of the federal poverty line (FPL)?

You may be able to get help from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and or the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC).

While both programs provide similar services, there are differences in who may apply, what is needed to apply, and benefits provided.



WIC Eligibility

WIC is a supplemental nutrition program that serves nutritionally at risk pregnant, breastfeeding or postpartum women, infants and children until their 5th birthday.

- Dads, grandparents and foster parents can apply for WIC benefits for their eligible family member.
- Income guidelines for the WIC program are at or below 185% of the FPL.
- If you receive Medicaid insurance (HUSKY A, C or D), SNAP or TFA benefits, you are eligible to receive WIC benefits.
- Other requirements include showing proof of identity and Connecticut residency. WIC does not ask about immigration status.

<https://portal.ct.gov/dph/WIC/WIC#48077>

SNAP Eligibility

SNAP provides benefits to supplement a family's food budget.

- Eligibility for SNAP benefits are based on household income and assets.
- A household is any related or unrelated people living under the same roof who generally share meals.
- Monthly SNAP benefits are based on the household's income.
- SNAP program guidelines are at or below 185% of the FPL.
- Other requirements include showing proof of identity and Connecticut residency.

<https://portal.ct.gov/SNAP>

WIC Benefits

WIC provides nutritious foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and referrals.

- WIC foods are chosen based on their nutritional value and USDA standards.
- Other than the cash value fruit and vegetable benefit WIC does not provide a dollar amount to buy WIC foods.
- WIC provides specific amounts and types of WIC approved foods based on your category (pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum woman, infant or child) and nutritional needs.



Benefits provided on the eWIC card are good for 30 days and **do not** roll over if unused.

SNAP Benefits

SNAP provides a monthly dollar amount to be used to buy food for you or your family. Benefits are:

- Calculated based on the number of eligible household members for the household size.
- Provided monthly to the household on an Electronic Benefits Transaction (EBT) card.



SNAP benefits **do** roll over into the next month if they are not used.

✓ WIC Allowed:

- Milk, cheese and yogurt
- Hot or cold cereal and whole grains (bread, pasta, brown rice, whole wheat and corn tortillas)
- Peanut butter, beans, eggs and tofu
- Dollar amount for fruits and vegetables
- 100% fruit and vegetable juice
- Infant foods (cereal, fruits and vegetables, and formula)
- Canned fish available for certain categories of pregnant and breastfeeding women

✗ WIC Not Allowed:

Any food items not listed above. For specific items that are not allowed, please view the Connecticut WIC Approved Food Guide and look for the Do Not Buy boxes. <https://portal.ct.gov/DPH/WIC/Approved-Food-Guide>

✓ SNAP Allowed:

Generally, any staple food can be purchased with SNAP benefits including basic foods that make up a significant portion of a person's diet and are usually prepared at home and eaten as a meal.



The 4 staple food categories are: Fruits and vegetables; Meat, poultry, and fish; Dairy products; Breads and cereals.

Other foods such as snack foods and non-alcoholic beverages or energy drinks, that have a "Nutrition Facts" label as well as seeds and plants, which produce food for the household to eat.

✗ SNAP Not Allowed:

Non-food items: Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco; vitamins/supplements, medicines; live animals (except fish/shellfish); hot or prepared foods fit for immediate consumption.

Any non-food items: Pet foods; cleaning supplies; paper products or other household supplies; hygiene items or cosmetics.

For a full list, visit:

<https://www.fns.usda.gov/snap/eligible-food-items>

If you qualify for both SNAP and WIC, you may receive benefits from both. Smart shopping and healthy eating habits can help stretch your benefits to maximize value for your family.

If you need more help with food, call your local WIC office, 211 or click the links below.

<https://www.211ct.org>

<https://www.ctfoodbank.org>

<http://site.foodshare.org/>

https://www.ctoec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/04/OEC_Food-Resources-for-Kids-During-COVID-19_English.pdf

<https://www.connect.ct.gov/>



Prepare before you shop:

- Look through your cabinets and refrigerator to plan your grocery list. Use leftover items first to prevent food from being wasted or spoiling.
- View weekly sales flyers, coupons and store savings to build your grocery list. Shop the sales!
- Review your WIC family benefit list to see your available benefits. Pay attention to your benefit start and end dates.
- Start your shopping list with WIC approved items you plan to buy. SNAP benefits can be used for other items WIC doesn't provide like meat, canned soups, snack items and frozen meals.
- Before you shop, check your available SNAP balance card by calling **1-888-328-2666** or online by visiting <https://www.connectebt.com/>



While you shop:

- Stick to your list.
- Can't find a WIC item, use the WICShopper app Scan function to find a WIC approved substitute.
- Look at expiration dates to reduce food waste.



At checkout:

- Give the cashier your coupons and/or store savings card.
- Always use your WIC card as your first form of payment. Next, use your SNAP benefits or any other form of payment. Ask for and review the mid-transaction receipt before you choose "Yes" to be sure that your WIC approved items are coming off your WIC benefit balance and not SNAP.
- Using self-check-out? Follow the same steps listed above.

WIC Benefit Reminders:

- Benefits are good for 30 days and do not roll over into the next month.
- Watch your start and end dates.
- Use all your benefits so you can maximize other food dollars available.
- If you need recipe ideas on how to use WIC foods, ask your local WIC staff, visit the WICShopper app Yummy Recipes section or visit <https://www.snap4ct.org/recipes.html>

