

April 10, 2020

Page 1 of 3

BLAST COMMUNICATION

Georgia WIC Partner Letter COVID-19 Response

We received the following information yesterday from Georgia WIC that provides general information to the public about WIC services during this time. We have also worked with them to create a COVID-19 blast specifically for the medical community that is pending approval. That blast communication will be shared as soon as it is approved by Georgia WIC.

(If you are receiving this as a fax, please visit our website to view the message with links at www.GAAAP.org)



Kathleen E. Toomey, M.D., M.P.H., Commissioner

Brian Kemp, Governor

2 Peachtree Street, NW, 15th Floor
Atlanta, Georgia 30303-3142

dph.ga.gov

April 13, 2020

Georgia WIC and COVID-19 FAQs

In an effort to provide the highest level of customer service, the Georgia Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women Infants and Children (WIC) continues to provide benefits and services. New applicants and current program participants will be assisted as promptly as possible within the guidance outlined by our State and Federal regulatory agencies. Please review the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) and respective guidance for how Georgia WIC is continuing to provide services during these uncertain times.

Who is eligible for program benefits during this time? Are there restrictions or changes with who can apply?

The requirements for WIC participation have not changed. Georgia WIC serves income eligible women, infants, and children in the following categories:

- Infants and Children age 1 to 5 years (including foster children)
- Pregnant Women
- Breastfeeding Mothers (up to 1 year)
- Postpartum Women (up to 6 months)

To find out if you qualify for WIC, go online to take the [WIC Eligibility Assessment](#).

If you want to know about eligibility for other food, financial or medical assistance programs such as SNAP, TANF or Medicaid, please visit the Georgia Gateway website at <https://gateway.ga.gov/access/> to create an account and apply for services.

How can I apply without coming into the WIC clinic or health department?

Applicants can complete the Georgia WIC online intake process where they will be contacted by phone for assistance with scheduling an appointment and completing the application process.

Online registration can be completed anytime via <https://gaprereg.statewic.net/>. Registrations are processed Monday-Friday, during regular business hours.

American Academy of Pediatrics

Many WIC clinic locations are also able to complete applications and other services remotely by phone. Applicants and current participants are encouraged to contact their local clinic or call center directly to schedule an appointment by phone. For assistance in determining which WIC clinic to call, applicants may contact 1-800-228-9173.

Georgia WIC is working to finalize implementation of online WIC applications through Georgia Gateway. The availability of online applications can be monitored at <https://dph.georgia.gov/WIC>. We encourage applicants to regularly check the site for updates. Once online applications are accessible, applicants deemed income eligible, will be contacted to complete or schedule the required nutrition assessment.

How will I know if a WIC clinic is closed or has changed their hours of operation?

For assistance with determining which WIC clinics are open, contact your WIC clinic using the number on the back of the WIC folder, or you may call 1-800-228-9173.

What social distancing procedures are in place at the WIC clinic?

Georgia WIC is following the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines for COVID-19, including social distancing. Many clinics are limiting the number of people that can come into the clinic at one time and providing phone and drive-up services. Georgia WIC was also granted a physical presence waiver to assist with completing some WIC services without the need for a participant or applicant to visit the WIC clinic. Families are encouraged to contact their local WIC clinic for updates on operations and procedures.

What should I do if I missed my WIC appointment and I don't have any more vouchers?

The WIC clinic may be able to reschedule your appointment and extend your benefits for one additional month. Clinics may also be able to complete your visit over the phone. If WIC is unable to extend your benefits, you can reschedule the missed appointment. Benefits will resume once the appointment is complete. For specific information regarding your appointment, contact your WIC clinic using the number on the back of the WIC folder, or you may call 1-800-228-9173 for further assistance.

How do I get my vouchers if a clinic is closed or I can't come to the clinic?

Georgia WIC continues to support participants throughout the state while respecting the CDC's social distancing guidelines. Many clinics are providing the option to mail vouchers for participants actively enrolled in the program. If you would like to request to have your vouchers mailed or obtain specific information regarding the receipt of vouchers, contact your WIC clinic using the number on the back of the WIC folder, or you may call 1-800-228-9173 for further assistance.

Where can I go to redeem my vouchers? Are there changes to what I can get?

Vouchers must be redeemed at a WIC authorized vendor store location. There are no options to have WIC food items delivered to the participant. If participants are unable to go to the store, they may authorize a new alternate or alternate/proxy to pick up food benefits and/or redeem them at the grocery store. The WIC participant must simply notify their WIC clinic of the update and the authorized person must sign their name on the WIC folder.

Vouchers must be signed, at the grocery store and in the presence of the cashier, by an authorized person listed on their WIC folder. If vouchers are signed prior to being redeemed, or by someone not listed on the folder, a participant risks losing the food benefits provided on the voucher.

Georgia WIC is making temporary changes to the approved foods list for specified categories, if the currently approved item is out of stock at the store. The following food categories will have these temporary changes:

- **Milk:** Any fat content milk including fat-free/skim, 1%, 2%, and/or whole milk up to one gallon. Participants should choose the fat content closest to their issued milk.
- **Eggs:** Any brand and size in dozen and half dozen packaging. Exceptions include organic, low cholesterol, free range, pasture-raised, natural cage free, cage free, enriched colony, vegetarian fed,

or added Omega 3, DHA, orARA.

- **Whole Grains:** Any WIC approved brand of:
 - Bread in package sizes up to 24 ounces
 - Pasta, tortillas, and brown rice in package sizes up to 16 ounces

Is breastfeeding and pumping safe during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Georgia WIC continues to support and encourage breastfeeding during the COVID-19 pandemic. Contacting your WIC office is the best way to get the support you need for breastfeeding during this time.

If you have questions or concerns about breastmilk safety or how to safely pump/express breastmilk for your baby, please visit the links below for guidance provided by the CDC and Medela, the manufacturer of Georgia WIC's breast pumps.

<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/pregnancy-breastfeeding.html>

<https://www.medela.com/breastfeeding/mums-journey/covid-19-information-concerning-breastfeeding>

What should I do if I can't find my child's formula in the store?

If you cannot find the formula listed on your vouchers in the store, we recommend that you first check with a store manager or store employee to determine if the issued formula is in the stock room. You should also ask when the store expects the next delivery of the formula. If you are unable to get the information requested or obtain formula in a timely manner, contact 1-800- 228-9173 for further assistance.

Special Formula:

Participants with diagnosed medical conditions who are receiving special formula through Georgia WIC may be able to pick up their prescribed formula from a local WIC clinic. If you or your child have been prescribed a special formula, contact your local WIC clinic for more information about this process.

Receiving a special formula requires documentation from a medical provider. Georgia WIC is not able to arrange clinic pick-up for the following products:

- Enfamil Infant
- Enfamil Prosobee
- Enfamil Gentlease
- Enfamil 24
- Enfamil A.R.
- EnfaGrow Premium Toddler Transitions
- EnfaGrow Toddler Transitions Gentlease

Thank you for your ongoing partnership and support of the Georgia WIC Program. Please use and share this letter as deemed appropriate. Contact the Georgia WIC Program at 404-657- 2900 with additional questions or for more information.

Sean C. Mack,
Director Georgia WIC Program