



# Staff Tool

## Common Reasons Why Foods Aren't Eligible at the Store

### No Current Benefits:

- Participant used current benefits and forgot.
  - ✓ Check shopping list to see what's left on current account benefits.
  - ✓ Check the Journal of Transactions quick link to see what the participant purchased to date.
- Benefits don't start until a few days from now.
  - ✓ Normally this happens when a participant comes in before the family issuance date and then tries to shop before the First Date to Spend (FDTS).

### Milk:

- Participant picks up the wrong milk fat type (non-fat + low fat, 2%, or whole.)
  - ✓ You may hear "I got this before." Milk fat types change when children turn 2 years old. Make sure participants understand changes to their benefits.
- In some cases, store staff didn't scan the milk. Based on the balance receipt, store staff decided specific types weren't allowed.
  - ✓ We've communicated to all stores they must scan the milk to know if it's approved.

### Produce:

Stores must map each produce item to an approved PLU code so it will scan as WIC approved. If a store forgets to map an item, it won't scan.

- Nothing will come off the participant's WIC card.
- The participant has the choice to pay for the item in full.

### Un-Allowed WIC Item:

The participant selected an item that isn't approved.

- Check the Shopping Guide.
- Contact WIC foods if you have any questions.

### New Food Item or UPC:

If we're not aware of the item or a UPC change, the item won't appear in the Approved Product list. We'll need to review the item and, if allowed, add it to our Approved list.

### Store Data Issue:

Store computers upload the approved WIC foods list nightly. If there is a connectivity issue during the upload, not all foods will download into the store system correctly.

- The state must rule out all other issues before we can identify if it's a data download issue on the store side.



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### If a participant was denied foods at the store, follow these steps:

1. Confirm participant had active benefits on the day they shopped.
2. Check to see if items are allowed:
  - Check the milk fat type (non-fat + low fat, 2%, or whole) on the participant's WIC benefits, since it's a common mistake for participants to pick up the wrong milk fat type.
  - Check the [Shopping Guide](#) to see what participants can or can't get on WIC.

If the above reasons weren't the cause of denied foods at the store, email the WIC Foods team at [wawicfoods@doh.wa.gov](mailto:wawicfoods@doh.wa.gov).

### We'll need the following information:

- ✓ **Family ID Number:** This helps us look up the transaction.
- ✓ **Store name and location**
- ✓ **Date** they went shopping.
- ✓ **Food item(s):**

We need as much information as possible. We need to know food category (milk, cereal, etc.), type, size, brand name, and the 12-digit UPC or PLU, when available. For fresh produce, we'll need the specific variety; e.g. Pink Lady apples instead of just "apples".

  - **Receipt:** It's most useful to have a store receipt. This removes a lot of guesswork and clearly supports a claim when working with stores. Ask the participant for a copy of the receipt and have them keep the original.
  - **Pictures:** If it's possible for the participant to provide, ask them for a picture of the item denied.

### Is a food item is not scanning as WIC-eligible in the app or at the register, but you think it should be?

Use the "I couldn't buy this" feature in the WICShopper App:

- Click the icon on the app home screen.
- Fill out information about the WIC participant, the store, and food item.
- Take a picture of the item from the front and attach.
- Take a picture of the item's barcode and attach. Make sure the entire barcode number is readable.



I couldn't buy this!





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