

# NCDHHS Encourages WIC Participants to Use Food Benefits During COVID-19

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The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is encouraging North Carolinians who are enrolled in the federal [Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children](#) (WIC) to use their food benefits during COVID-19 to support good nutrition for their families. All WIC participants are getting monthly food benefits automatically added to their eWIC account because of the pandemic.

Many of the WIC beneficiaries in North Carolina have not used their full food benefits each month since May 22, when the state's initial Stay At Home Order in response to COVID-19 went into effect. Because WIC allowances do not roll over, beneficiaries lose any food balance they do not spend during a family issue month.

On March 20, 2020, the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) waived the requirement for participants to attend appointments in-person at a local WIC clinic to renew their families' food benefits each month. This change allows both WIC beneficiaries and WIC clinic staff to avoid unnecessary in-person contact during COVID-19, supporting states' efforts to slow the spread of the virus.

NCDHHS is working to increase awareness that WIC food allowances are being auto-issued each month on participants' family issue date so that North Carolinians can get the full benefits of the federal program. Families enrolled in WIC can download the Bnft® App, available in the App Store or on Google Play, and enable notifications to ensure they never miss an update to their eWIC account.

More information and tips for WIC participants can be found on the department's new Use Your WIC During COVID-19 digital flyer, which is available in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

For beneficiaries who require further assistance navigating the program, local WIC clinics remain open and ready to serve, even if some have altered hours or locations due to COVID-19. Many of the services offered by WIC clinics can now also be managed over the phone. To find the contact information for a WIC clinic in North Carolina, search the WIC County Directory: [www.nutritionnc.com/mywic/index.htm](http://www.nutritionnc.com/mywic/index.htm).

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