

# WIC Matters Newsletter for Vendors

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## Formula Shortages

A BIG THANK YOU for helping families in our state access formula the best you are able! Vendors who filled out our survey that was sent via email last month helped strengthen our position that we needed to continue offering substitutes for Similac products. We will offer substitutes for Similac products through at least August 2022. [Here](#) is a list of the substitutes for each of the contract formulas.

## Potential New Formulas through Operation Fly Formula

Some of you may have heard about the Biden-Harris Operation Fly Formula initiative where formula has been flown from other countries to the United States in an effort to improve the formula shortage and get more formula on store shelves. Currently, we are waiting to know which formulas may be available through our vendors in the state. Once we are aware of the UPCs that will be available in our state, we can add those to the Minnesota WIC APL. It can take between 3-7 days for UPCs to be added to the APL and for all stores to download the APL. **If you know that your store will be receiving shipments of any of these formulas, please email [health.wicvendor@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wicvendor@state.mn.us) with UPCs and brand information, so we may add them as quickly as possible.**

## Formula Contract Change Planned for October 1<sup>st</sup>

Formula companies bid on different state contracts to secure their product placement on store shelves in those states. States are required to accept the best bid. Minnesota's WIC formula contract went out for bid a few months ago, and the winning bid was recently announced. **For the contract period beginning October 1st, Mead Johnson (Enfamil products) is expected to be the new formula supplier for Minnesota WIC. For now, please continue to offer Abbott products (Similac formulas) when available.** The transition period will involve monitoring store stock of Similac and paring down orders as October 1st nears and starting to place orders for Enfamil products in anticipation of the transition. Some families will still have Similac products on their benefits through the month of October, as some benefits are loaded onto cards in late September, and September's contract will still cover Similac products. We know this is not always an easy transition for our vendor partners or for parents who will need to switch their babies to a new formula if they have been able to find Similac products. More information will be provided on this change soon.

Note that Abbott will retain the contract for soy-based formulas (Similac Isomil), so this formula will continue to be provided to Minnesota WIC participants past October 1.

## New Civil Rights Language

On May 5, 2022, the USDA Food and Nutrition Service added gender identity and sexual orientation as protected bases in the determination of discrimination based on sex. **As a WIC vendor, you must not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, including gender identity and sexual orientation, disability, or age.** This new language will be updated in your next Minnesota WIC Vendor agreement. Participants are advised on how to report civil rights abuses, and **it is a serious violation of your vendor agreement, if a complaint of discrimination is found credible at your store.**

## WIC Vendor Contract Consultants and Program Integrity Specialist

Some WIC staff have moved into new roles, and new staff have recently joined the vendor unit.

Ahmed is our Program Integrity Specialist and has been in his role for a little over a year. He works in compliance, making sure that vendors and participants are following the rules and policies of the WIC Program. In addition to English, Ahmed is fluent in Somali and French.

### Katie Dempsey

Katie Dempsey oversees our CSFP (Commodity Supplemental Food Program) for seniors. She recently had some of her job duties changed to include the Vendor Contract Consultant role. She will be monitoring stores for compliance of minimum stock and pricing. She may be a familiar face, as she helped with our role out of the eWIC system of payment.

## Katie Walz

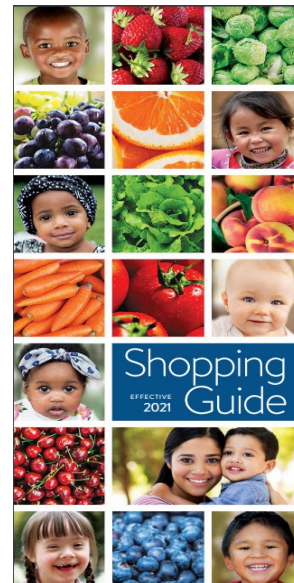
Katie Walz is our newest hire. She brings WIC experience to the Vendor Contract Consultant position from having worked at Hennepin County WIC prior to moving to this state WIC role. She is also veteran of the Navy and fluent in Spanish. Along with her other job duties, she will be visiting stores for compliance of minimum stock and pricing soon.

## Vendor reauthorization coming up!

Minnesota WIC vendors have agreements in place for a period of three years. The new agreement period will begin on April 1, 2023. You will be receiving information, along with reauthorization materials, in the fall of 2022. Please watch for these materials either in your mail or email.

## Shopping Guides – 2021 Guides still current

Some of you have been calling to find out how to get new 2022 Shopping Guides. **Our 2021 guides are still effective and should be used for the current time.** We did not put an end date on the guides, in case no significant changes were needed in 2022, eliminating the need for reprinting. If you have a guide that is not dated 2021 on the front, please discard it. You may reorder the current Shopping Guide [here](#). When changes are made to the Shopping Guide, we ship them to each individual store or corporate offices for distribution.



### References:

Similac Formula Recall, Minnesota WIC Approved Substitutions List:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/recall/substitutions.pdf>WIC Vendor Materials Order Form:

<https://www.health.state.mn.us/forms/cfh/wicmaterials/index.html?target=VENDOR>

For vendor related questions or concerns, please email [health.wicvendor@state.mn.us](mailto:health.wicvendor@state.mn.us)



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