

Important Notice about Help Buying Food During COVID-19 Pandemic

Because one or more children in your household normally has access to free or reduced-price lunch at school and due to school closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, your household is now eligible to receive a benefit on an EBT card to help you buy food for your children. This new program is called Pandemic-EBT (or P-EBT) and is run by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services. This program is in addition to other benefits and services your family may be receiving, including free meals for your children at local school and community meal sites.

Be sure to be on the lookout for your P-EBT card, which will arrive by mail in a few days. This notice is to provide instructions on how to activate and use your P-EBT card when it arrives.

How to Activate Your P-EBT Card:

Your household will receive a P-EBT card in the mail pre-loaded with food benefits. The card works just like a debit card for your P-EBT benefits. The P-EBT card can be used to purchase food items at EBT authorized retailers, including most major grocery stores.

Before you can use your card, **you must first activate your card** and select a Personal Identification Number (PIN). There are **three ways to activate your card** or check your balance:

1. Visit www.ebtedge.com. Click on More Information under EBT Cardholder. You will be prompted to login and/or register your account.
2. Download the **ebtEDGE** mobile app. The app is available as a free download on the [Apple Store](#) and [Google Play](#).
3. Call **1-888-622-7328** and follow the prompts to activate your PIN.

You will be asked for your activation code. It is the date of birth of the youngest school age child in your household. Enter the date of birth using two digits for the month, two digits for the day, and four digits for the year. For example, if the date of birth is June 1, 2008, you would enter 06012008.

How Does Your P-EBT Card Work?

When you go through a checkout line, you pass or "swipe" the P-EBT card through the machine just like a typical bank debit card. You will be asked to enter your four-digit PIN code. The cost of the food is automatically subtracted from your P-EBT account balance. Also, know that:

- Your P-EBT benefits don't have to be used all at one time; unused P-EBT benefits will automatically rollover to the next month;
- You can use your P-EBT card as often as you want each month;
- There is no charge for using your P-EBT card;
- The store receipt will show the amount of benefits remaining in your P-EBT account;
- Any benefits not used after one year will expire from your account;
- Benefits are intended for the children in your home and should not be used for someone else;
- If an eligible child or children is not or has not resided in your household during the period of mandated school closures, you should destroy the P-EBT card and not utilize the benefits.
- You may decline this benefit by destroying your EBT card.

Items you CAN Buy with a P-EBT Card:

- Breads and cereals
- Fruits and vegetables
- Meats, fish and poultry
- Dairy products
- Seeds and plants that produce food, such as tomato and cucumber seeds
- Bottled water and non-alcoholic beverages

Items you CANNOT Buy with a P-EBT Card:

- Beer, wine, liquor, cigarettes or tobacco
- Any nonfood items, such as: pet foods, soaps, paper products and household supplies
- Vitamins and medicines
- Hot foods or foods that are already prepared in the store

If you have questions about your P-EBT card, you can call the North Carolina EBT Call Center at [1-866-719-0141](tel:1-866-719-0141)