

Virginia **EBT**

Questions and Answers



*A safe and easy way
to use your benefits.*

*Save this brochure. It tells you how to use
your Virginia EBT card.*



Customer Service

 **1-866-281-2448**

24 hours a day, 7 days a week

www.ebt.acs-inc.com

TTY (Relay Service for Hearing/Speech Impaired)

1-800-828-1120



Welcome to Virginia EBT!

SNAP - Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
(formerly known as the Food Stamp Program)

What does EBT mean?

EBT means Electronic Benefits Transfer. The Virginia EBT card is like a debit card that lets you access your SNAP account at grocery stores. You access your account by swiping your card and entering your secret PIN.

What is a PIN?

PIN means Personal Identification Number. You must have a 4-digit PIN to use your card and access the benefits in your account. To choose a PIN, you call 1-866-281-2448 and follow the instructions. You will need the following when you call:

- Virginia EBT Card Number
- Social Security Number
- Birth Date

If you don't have a Social Security Number, you will need your SNAP case number.

TIPS on choosing and caring for your PIN:

- √ Choose a PIN that is easy for you to remember but hard for someone else to figure out if they find your card.
- √ Don't use numbers that are easy for someone to figure out, like your address or phone number.
- √ Memorize your PIN. Do NOT write it on anything you carry with you. Do NOT write it on your EBT card or card sleeve.

If you forget your PIN, call 1-866-281-2448 and choose a new PIN before you go to the store. If you enter the wrong PIN at the store, the point-of-sale (POS) machine will deny your transaction with the message "INVALID PIN". After five (5) wrong PIN attempts, your card will not work until 12:01 a.m. the next day, unless you call 1-866-281-2448 and choose a new PIN.

If someone finds your card and the PIN is with it, that person could swipe your card, enter your PIN, and spend the money in your account. If that happens, benefits will not be replaced.

When do I receive my benefits? How much do I get?

When you were approved for SNAP benefits, you got a Notice of Action telling you how many benefits you would get each month, and for how many months. Your monthly benefits are automatically deposited into your EBT account right after midnight on the first day of each month, even if the first is a weekend or holiday.

How do I know how much money is in my account?

Before you shop, **KNOW YOUR BALANCE** by any of these ways:

- Save your receipts. The receipts always show how much you spent and how much is left in your account.
- On the Internet, go to www.ebt.acs-inc.com and follow the Virginia link. Besides your balance, you can see your last 90 days of transactions online, too.
- Call 1-866-281-2448.
- Some grocery stores have a point-of-sale (POS) machine in their customer service area, where you can swipe your card and check your balance before you shop.

Where can I shop?

At any store displaying the Quest logo or Virginia EBT card. If you don't see those signs, ask the manager or



cashier if they accept the Virginia EBT card before you shop. Some retailers like a Farmer's Market or Route Vendor also accept EBT cards; ask them if you are not sure.

What can I buy with my Virginia EBT card?

You can buy the following items with your Virginia EBT card:

- Any food to be eaten at home by people, including baby food, non-alcoholic beverages, and seasonings.
- Seeds and plants to grow food for your own family's consumption.

SNAP purchases are not charged sales tax. You may use manufacturer's cents-off coupons to reduce the cost of your groceries, but you will have to pay sales tax on the value of the coupons.

You cannot buy non-grocery items with the Virginia EBT card, such as cleaning products, pet food, paper products, alcohol, or tobacco. You will have to pay for those items with cash, by check, or a credit or debit card.

You cannot access cash from a grocery store or ATM with your Virginia EBT card.

How do I use my EBT card at the store?

After you complete your grocery shopping, proceed to a checkout lane.

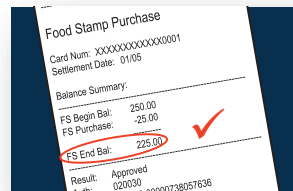
- Tell the cashier that you are using your Virginia EBT card.

- You or the cashier swipes your card through a POS machine.



- Cashier enters the amount of the purchase. Check the total to make sure it is correct.
- YOU must enter your secret 4-digit PIN on the PIN pad. Never tell the cashier or anyone else your secret PIN. Never ask the cashier to enter your PIN for you.

- The machine prints a receipt showing your beginning



balance, the amount of your purchase, and the amount left in your account. **SAVE YOUR RECEIPT.** It is the easiest way to know your balance.

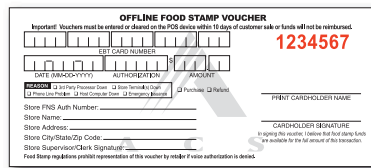
- Take your card and receipt with you when you leave.

What if I don't have enough money in my SNAP account to cover the groceries?

Let the clerk know before you check out. You can pay for your groceries using a combination of your Virginia EBT card and cash (or by check, or credit or debit card), but the clerk will need to know before you try to pay. Some store cash registers have a special key to push in order to accept two methods of payment. You may have to pay the cash amount before you can pay using your Virginia EBT card.

What if a store's EBT machine is not working or the store does not have a card reader?

Some places that sell groceries might not have a POS device, like a Farmer's Market or Route Vendor.



The image shows a form titled "OFFLINE FOOD STAMP VOUCHER". At the top, it says "Important: Vouchers must be entered or scanned on the POS device within 15 days of customer sale or funds will not be reintroduced." Below this, there are several fields: "EBT CARD NUMBER" with the value "1234567", "DATE (MM/SS/YY)", "AMOUNT", and "VOLUME". There are also checkboxes for "I am the Store Owner", "I am the Store Clerk", "I am the Store Manager", and "I am the Store Supervisor". At the bottom, there are fields for "Store FNS Auth Number", "Store Name", "Store Address", "Store City/State/Zip Code", and "Store Supervisor/Clerk Signature". On the right side, there are fields for "PRINT CARDHOLDER NAME" and "CARDHOLDER SIGNATURE". A note at the bottom right says "If using this machine to issue that food stamp funds are available for the balance of this transaction." A small note at the bottom left says "Food Stamp program cannot reimburse for this voucher by retailer. Funds authorization is denied."

Sometimes the EBT machines aren't working in the stores. In these situations, the cashier fills out a paper voucher with the amount of purchase and calls the Retailer Customer Service Help Desk to get an authorization number for your purchase, and enters that number on the voucher. Make sure the amount is right, and then you must sign the voucher. Keep a copy for your records.

How should I take care of my Virginia EBT card?

Keep your EBT card. It can be used month after month. If you forget your card at home, you cannot use your SNAP benefits.

If your card is lost, stolen or damaged, call 1-866-281-2448 immediately to report it. Stay on the line after the system asks for your card number - if you don't have your card number, you will be told how to transfer to a Customer Service Representative to report the card lost, stolen or damaged.

TIPS on caring for your Virginia EBT card:

- √ Keep your card safe and clean, like you would a credit card.
- √ Keep the black stripe on the back free from scratches.
- √ Do not bend or twist it, or use it to scrape windshields or open door locks.
- √ Do not store it near magnets, like handbag clasps, refrigerator magnets or TVs.

Do I have to use all my benefits in one month?

You do not have to spend all your benefits each month. Benefits you do not use stay in the account and roll over to the next month. But if you do not use your card at all, after 150 days you will get a letter telling you your account will be frozen after 180 days if you do not buy something. Once your account is frozen, you will have to call your local social services worker to reactivate it. Sometimes people who get a small amount each month want to save it up. That is OK, but buy something every few months so the account will not be frozen.

How do I protect my SNAP benefits?

If your card is lost or stolen, call 1-866-281-2448 immediately. When entering your secret PIN on the PIN pad, be sure no one else can see what numbers you are entering. If someone else knows your PIN and uses your benefits, your benefits will not be replaced.

When should I call the Client Customer Service Help Desk?

Call the Client Customer Service at 1-866-281-2448 if:

- You receive your new Virginia EBT card and need to choose a PIN.
- You want to change your PIN.
- Your card is ever lost, stolen or damaged and you need to replace it.
- Someone is using your Virginia EBT card without your approval and you need to report it.
- You need to find out your balance.
- You need help or have questions about your Virginia EBT card or account.



The Client Customer Service Help Desk is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Legal Notice

You must not give false information or hide information to get SNAP benefits. You must not trade or sell EBT cards or PINs. You must not use benefits to buy non-food items or exchange benefits for cash at a retailer. You must not use someone else's EBT card for your household. If you intentionally break any of these rules, you can be disqualified from the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, fined, and/or imprisoned.

This is an equal opportunity program. If you think you have been discriminated against in your efforts to receive government benefits because of race, color, national origin, sex, age, disability, religious creed, or political beliefs, write immediately to:

Administrator, Food and Nutrition Services
3101 Park Center Drive
Alexandria, VA 22302

Virginia Department of Social Services and the US Department of Agriculture are equal opportunity providers and employers.