

SECTION: Nutrition Services**SUBJECT: Nutrition Education**

Federal Regulations: §246.11(c)(6)

Nutrition Services Standards: Standard 7: Nutrition Education and Counseling

See also WIC Policies 100-14, 100-15, 200-28, 300-01 and 300-09

POLICY

Nutrition education shall be made available to each participant, parent, guardian, or caretaker at a rate of at least once per quarter, but not necessarily taking place within each quarter.

Contacts shall be made available through individual or group sessions, which are appropriate to the individual participant's nutritional needs, interests, household situation, cultural preferences, language spoken, literacy level and religious values.

Nutrition education is provided with participant-centered counseling approaches and based upon the current U.S. Dietary Guidelines for Americans <http://www.health.gov/dietaryguidelines/>. Nutrition education is based on the participant's individual nutrition assessment and connected to positive health outcomes established for the participant's category. All pregnant participants shall be encouraged to breastfeed unless contraindicated for health reasons.

Guidance

Staff should use participant-centered counseling approaches to support participants' in identifying their own motivation for change, setting individualized and attainable goals while providing clear and relevant "how to" actions to accomplish those goals.

Nutrition education should be tailored to address the specific needs of migrant farm workers, homeless individuals, substance-abusing individuals, high-risk participants, and /or breastfeeding women. WIC staff should also consider the following when providing nutrition education and breastfeeding promotion:

- Consider the nutritional needs and concerns, household situation, cultural practices, geographic locations, environmental influences and educational abilities of the participant as identified through the nutrition assessment process.
- Respect a participant's literacy level and primary language spoken.
- Account for a participant's food preference, when applicable.
- Provide messages on evidence-based and/or effective strategies, methodologies, techniques, and nationally recognized sources. Examples include Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Core Messages, More Matters, Dietary Guidelines for Americans, Healthy People Goals and Objectives, The Surgeon General's Call to Action to Support Breastfeeding, Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, Bright Futures Nutrition, Using Loving Support to Grow and Glow in WIC, etc.).

- Encourage and support breastfeeding in a non-judgmental, evidenced based, manner with a focus on exclusively breastfeeding for 6 months and continuing for one year or longer as mutually desired by both mother and baby. To further promote success, work with participant to set realistic short-term goals, and consider a long-term plan.
- Provides drug and other harmful substance abuse information to all pregnant, postpartum and breastfeeding women and to parents or caretakers of infants and children.
- Provides exit counseling for all women participants.

Documentation

Follow policy 300-09, which outlines appropriate documentation of nutrition education in CT-WIC.

Referrals

Offer newly enrolled participants an explanation of one or more of the following referrals:

- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP)
- Temporary Family Assistance (TFA)
- Healthcare for Uninsured Kids & Youth (HUSKY)
- Child Support Enforcement Program
- Expanded Food & Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP)
- Summer Food Service Program
- Breastfeeding Peer Counseling Program (BFPC)

These key points should be conveyed to applicants/clients at the time of first enrollment. These items alone do not satisfy the nutrition education requirement for the certification period.

See WIC Policy 200-28 for additional information related to the Coordination of Services-Referrals to other programs by WIC Staff.

Subsequent certifications

Subsequent certifications should re-affirm these key points covered in orientation/initial certification, however nutrition education should focus on the client's identified nutritional risk condition, specific area of concern (i.e. nutrition, diet, health, and/or referral) and ways to achieve the identified, category-appropriate positive health outcome.

Plan and offer subsequent nutrition education contacts that ensure continuity of care and follow-up on initial assessment to include a discussion of one of more of the following:

- Participant's concerns or questions related to health, nutrition practices, referrals, etc.
- Participant's particular nutritional needs according to the category of eligibility and desired health outcomes, i.e. needs of pregnant, breastfeeding, postpartum women, infants, and children.
- Relationship between nutrition, physical activity and health.
- The benefits of consuming a variety of foods including those not provided by the WIC program.
- CPA or client determined nutrient of special interest or need.
- Additional nutrition related topics.

Reminder: Nutrition education expenditures must account for at least 25% of each local agency's total expenditures.

Project ReNEW: State Developed Participant Nutrition Education Materials

As part of a WIC Special Projects Grant, a series of eight nutrition education handouts were developed for use with participants. Each handout details a different age range, highlighting developmental and nutritional milestones. The handouts were updated in 2010 along with a revised guidance tool. Please see *WIC 300-03 Project ReNEW Guidelines for Use* for additional details.

Quality Assurance

- In addition to the quarterly chart audit requirements (25 charts per quarter) outlined in the local agency contract, local agency management staff should conduct periodic observations of nutrition and breastfeeding education sessions as part of on-going quality assurance activities. At a minimum, observations must be conducted as part of the off-year Local agency Self-Assessment (WIC Policy 100-15). However, in most cases in order to effectively report on the measureable strategies in Local Agency Plan, results of staff observations must be included. Additionally, observations of program assistants are required to ensure appropriate customer service is provided, and program overview and program integrity topics are discussed.
- Per WIC Policy 100-14, program management is required to review and document the review of State agency memorandums, new and updated policies with all local agency staff. Local agencies should review their own policies, procedures, training materials and locally developed participant education materials to ensure they reflect current science and comply with Federal regulations.
- Periodic review and assessment of the clinic no-show rate and adjustment of clinic schedule for effectiveness of minimizing participant no-shows and accepting/accommodating walk-ins is expected.

References

- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. [WIC Nutrition Education Guidance 2006.](#)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. [WIC Nutrition Education Guidance, Appendix A 2006.](#)
- U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service. [Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment in WIC: The First Step in Quality Nutrition Services. 2006.](#)