

5.0 Nutrition Services*Effective Date : 3/19/2025***5.01 Nutrition Services Overview**

PURPOSE: The goals of nutrition education and counseling are to emphasize the relationship between nutrition, physical activity, and health, and assist in achieving a positive behavior change resulting in improved health outcomes. These goals can best be achieved by providing nutrition education and counseling with a client-centered approach.

A. POLICY

1. Nutrition services must:
 - a. Be conducted in an environment that is friendly, supportive, accommodating, respectful, and welcoming.
 - b. Have a positive approach based on health outcomes, rather than deficiencies.
 - c. Promote active involvement of clients and/or their caregivers.
 - d. Explore client's existing knowledge and readiness for change.
 - e. Be provided in a confidential and secure manner.
2. During each certification period, local agencies must offer at least the required number of nutrition education contacts, on separate days, to clients and/or their caregivers, at the following rate:

Number of Months of Certification	Number of Required Contacts
10-12 months	4
7-9 months	3
4-6 months	2
Up to 3 months	1

(See Policy 5.02, Nutrition Education Contacts.)

3. A comprehensive and standardized assessment to obtain and synthesize relevant, accurate client health and nutrition information allows for individualized nutrition education. (See Policy 2.13, Nutritional Risk Determination.)
4. Nutrition education must focus on the client's current and/or future (anticipatory guidance) concerns and questions in an interactive way that is easily understood and has practical relevance. A variety of nutrition education options, methods and materials must be used to meet the learning styles, needs, and preferences of individual clients. (See Policies 5.03 Nutrition Education at Certification/Recertification Appointments and 5.04 Nutrition Education at Mid-Certification Health Evaluation Appointments.)

5. The client and Competent Professional Authority (CPA) must cooperatively develop a nutrition education plan at the certification/recertification appointment and mid-certification health evaluation appointment to provide continuity of care to the client. (See Policies 2.24, Mid-Certification Health Evaluation, 5.03, Nutrition Education at Certification/Recertification Appointments, and 5.04, Nutrition Education at Mid-Certification Health Evaluation Appointments.)
6. Nutrition education documentation reflects what was provided during a nutrition education contact. This promotes continuity of care by enabling staff to follow-up and support previous nutrition education. Documentation of nutrition education is required per Policy 5.05, Nutrition Education Documentation.
7. High risk clients, including clients receiving Class III formulas, must be offered individual nutrition counseling with a Registered Dietitian (RD) for development of an individual care plan. Additionally, any client may be scheduled to meet with an RD upon request. (See Policy 5.06, Nutrition Services for High Risk Clients.)
8. Clients receive nutrition education at no charge. Food benefits must not be withheld, delayed, or denied to clients who refuse or fail to participate in nutrition education.
9. Local agencies must review nutrition education materials obtained or developed independently using Exhibit 5.01B, Nutrition Education Materials Evaluation Form. Evaluations must be kept on file at the local agency as long as the material is in use.
 - a. Materials developed by the State Agency and State Agency approved publications do not need to be reviewed by the local agency. See <https://www.michigan.gov/mdhhs/assistance-programs/wic/wic-staff/nutrition-and-health-for-staff> for a listing of State approved publications.
 - b. Nutrition education materials must be at a 4th to 8th grade reading level. Additional higher or lower reading level materials are acceptable based on client literacy level. (See Exhibit 5.01C, Nutrition Education Materials Reading Level Evaluation.)
10. Local agencies must maintain lesson plans for any group classes, facilitated group discussion, self-directed, and/or take-home nutrition education they develop. (See Exhibit 5.01D, Nutrition Education Lesson Plans, for specific requirements.)
11. WIC Staff providing nutrition education services must meet qualifications stated in Policy 1.07, Local Agency Staffing and Training.
12. A written agreement, signed annually, is required if nutrition education is provided by collaborative programs on a regular basis. Agreements must address the following roles and expectations:

- a. Time period the agreement covers.
- b. Collaborative Agency responsibilities.
- c. WIC responsibilities.

13. Local agencies must participate in mandatory nutrition education and breastfeeding time studies as determined by the State Agency. (Refer to Federal Regulations 7 246.11, Nutrition Education.)

B. Guidance

Staff may provide and document nutrition education to postpartum clients as their certification ends on how to stay healthy beyond WIC (often referred to as exit counseling). Topics may include, but are not limited to, the importance of a well-balanced diet, physical activity, immunizations, and folic acid during childbearing years; promotion of breastfeeding/chestfeeding; and the health risks of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs.

References:

7 CFR 246.11
7 CFR 246.14 (c) (1)
[Healthy Beyond WIC](#)
[Michigan WIC Client Resource List](#)
USDA WIC Policy Memo 2025-2: Cancellation of WIC Policy Memorandum #1994-9 WIC Exit Counseling Brochure
USDA WIC Policy Memo 2008-4, WIC Nutrition Services Documentation, July 3, 2008
USDA WIC Policy Memo 1994-9, WIC Exit Counseling Brochure, June 6, 1994
WIC Nutrition Education Guidance, USDA, WIC Program, January 26, 2006
WIC Nutrition Services Standards, USDA, FNS, August 2013

Cross-References:

1.03 Confidentiality
1.07 Local Agency Staffing and Training
2.13 Nutrition Risk Determination
2.24 Mid-Certification Health Evaluation
5.02 Nutrition Education Contacts
5.03 Nutrition Education at Certification/Recertification Appointments
5.04 Nutrition Education at Mid-Certification Health Evaluation Appointments
5.05 Nutrition Education Documentation
5.06 Nutrition Services for High Risk Clients

Exhibits:

5.01A Nutrition Education Definitions
5.01B Nutrition Education Materials Evaluation Form
5.01C Nutrition Education Materials Reading Level Evaluation
5.01D Nutrition Education Lesson Plans
5.01E Sample Nutrition Education Plan