

## Section 6.3: Initial Education

01/2010

**References:** 246.11 (e)(2)

**Policy:** The local agency must provide nutrition education (Initial Education) at certification and recertification.

**Purpose:** To ensure that nutrition education is made available to all participants.

### Procedures

- Provide nutrition education to all adult participants, parents, or caregivers of infant or child participants at the time of certification or recertification. See [Section 6.2: General Nutrition Education](#).
- Nutrition education should be individualized to the participant's nutritional needs considering the participant's nutritional risks, anticipatory guidance needs, and the concerns of the participant/caregiver.
- Competent Professional Authority (CPA) staff must provide initial education. See CPA policies in [Chapter 4](#).
- Provide education regarding the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol at the time of the family's first certification in WIC. See [Section 6.4: Drug and Harmful Substance Use Education](#).
- Encourage all pregnant women to breastfeed unless medically contraindicated. See [Section 6.5: Breastfeeding Education for Pregnant Women](#).
- Participants with high-risk nutrition related conditions should receive appropriate WIC service. See [Section 6.6: High Risk Individual Nutrition Care Plans](#).
- Refer participants to other programs and services as appropriate. See [Section 5.7: Referrals](#).
- Inform participants of the plan for additional education.
- For applicants determined ineligible for WIC, nutrition education and referrals must be offered and documented.
- Document nutrition education in the participant's record. See [Section 6.8: Nutrition Education Documentation](#).

## Guidance

- Provide a brief overview of the WIC Program to new participants. The overview should be provided as part of a positive, participant-centered assessment process. CPAs should address the topics below, as appropriate. (The “[Welcome to WIC](#)” handbook, which touches on the same topics, can be given to new participants as a resource on the program.)
  - The purpose of the WIC Program is to provide nutritional support through nutrition education and counseling, nutritious foods, referrals, and breastfeeding promotion and support, to improve participant health.
  - The nutrition assessment is necessary to identify nutrition needs (e.g., medical conditions, dietary practices) and participant interests so that WIC can provide benefits that are responsive to the participant’s wants and needs.
  - The relationship between WIC staff and the participant is a partnership – with open dialogue and two-way communication – working to achieve positive health outcomes.
  - WIC foods are supplemental. The foods satisfy some, but not all of the nutritional needs of participants.
  - WIC foods are for the participant. WIC foods are prescribed for each participant to promote and support their nutritional well-being.
  - Explain the length of the certification period. At the end of the period, eligibility will be reevaluated.
  - Present WIC appointments as an opportunity to ask questions and learn more about nutrition and feeding their family.
  - If the Minnesota WIC Program has implemented waiting lists, briefly explain that there is a priority system for participation in WIC based on nutritional needs.
- Advise the pregnant woman that she should know her HIV status. CPAs can inform the pregnant woman of the following:
  - The doctor, as a part of prenatal care, can do HIV testing.
  - There are medications available for HIV positive women that will reduce the chance of transmitting HIV infection to the baby during pregnancy, delivery, and postpartum.
  - Women who are HIV positive should not breastfeed.
  - See [Section 6.5: Breastfeeding Education for Pregnant Women](#) for additional information about breastfeeding contraindications.

## Reference – Complete Listing of Hyperlinks

### [Section 6.2: General Nutrition Education](#)

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6\\_2.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_2.pdf))

### [Chapter 4](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/mom.html#staffing) (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/mom.html#staffing>)

### [Section 6.4: Drug and Harmful Substance Use Education](#)

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6\\_4.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_4.pdf))

## SECTION 6.3: INITIAL EDUCATION

### Section 6.5: Breastfeeding Education for Pregnant Women

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6\\_5.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_5.pdf))

### Section 6.6: High Risk Individual Nutrition Care Plans

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6\\_6.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_6.pdf))

### Section 5.7: Referrals

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5\\_7.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch5/sctn5_7.pdf))

### Section 6.8: Nutrition Education Documentation

([https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6\\_8.pdf](https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/localagency/program/mom/chsctns/ch6/sctn6_8.pdf))

Welcome to WIC (<https://www.health.state.mn.us/docs/people/wic/ewic/welcometowic.pdf>)

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