



**SECTION:** Nutrition Services  
**SUBJECT:** **NUTRITION EDUCATION: Making Education Available**  
**DATE:** November 7, 2012 (*Revised*)

**POLICY:** Local WIC programs shall make nutrition education available to WIC participants, parents or caretakers according to federal and state requirements.

**PURPOSE:** To ensure that WIC participants receive adequate nutrition education focusing on their capacities, strengths and developmental needs.

**RELEVANT REGULATIONS:** 7 CFR §246.2—Definitions  
7 CFR §246.11—Nutrition Education, ¶(d) Local program responsibilities and ¶(e) Participant contacts  
WRO Policy Memo 807-K  
Letters dated September 23, 1994, and January 2, 1994, from the USDA Western Regional Office clarifying the federal interpretation of the regulations

**OREGON WIC PPM REFERENCES:** ♦215—Local Program Monitoring and Review  
♦660—Competent Professional Authority: Requirements  
♦661—Competent Professional Authority: Appropriate Counseling for Risk Levels  
♦820—Nutrition Education: Participant Contacts  
♦821—Nutrition Education: Telephone Contacts for High Risk Clients with the RD  
♦823—Nutrition Education: Second Nutrition Education Using Online Classes  
♦824—Nutrition Education: Self-Paced Lessons  
♦830—Nutrition Education: Documentation  
♦835—Nutrition Education: Attendance or Refusal  
♦860—Nutrition Education: Monitoring

**DEFINITIONS:** *High-risk participant* A participant with a health risk that has been identified to meet one of the state's high-risk criteria. See ♦661—Competent Professional Authority: Appropriate Counseling for Risk Levels.

*Nutrition education* Individual or group education sessions and the provision of information and educational materials designed to improve health status and achieve positive health change in dietary and physical activity habits, and that emphasize the relationships between nutrition, physical activity and health, all in keeping with the personal and cultural preferences of the individual.

*Nutritionist* A professional who meets one of the following qualifications: a Registered Dietitian (RD) with the American Dietetic Association (ADA), or eligible for ADA registration; a master's or doctoral degree in the field of nutrition from an accredited college or university; or an Oregon Licensed Dietitian (LD).

## NUTRITION EDUCATION: Making Education Available, *cont.*

**BACKGROUND:** The federal regulations require local programs to:

- “Make nutrition education available to all adult participants, and to parents or caretakers of infant and child participants, and whenever possible, to child participants.”
- Local programs also have the option to enter into agreement with another program to make nutrition education available to WIC participants.

**PROCEDURE:** 1.0 Provide or make available nutrition education to WIC participants using individual or group sessions.

1.1 All nutrition education contacts shall include face-to-face communication between staff providing the education and participants. Nutrition education contacts shall be made available to all participants including participants who do not receive food packages such as fully breastfeeding infants < 6 months old and some breastfeeding women whose infants are > 6 months old and mostly formula fed.

*Group nutrition education*

1.2 Group nutrition education is nutrition education provided face-to-face by a WIC staff person to multiple WIC participants or their caregivers at one time, usually used to meet the second nutrition education contact requirement, and is designed to meet participant nutritional needs, risks, and interests. See the Oregon WIC Training Module “*Providing Group Nutrition Education*” for guidelines and training on providing group education.

*Individual nutrition education*

1.3 Individual nutrition education shall take the form of one-to-one counseling or, under some circumstances, self-guided education. Individual nutrition education shall be designed to meet participant nutritional needs, risks, and interests. See the Oregon “*WIC Participant Centered Education e-Learning Module*” for guidelines and training on providing individual education.

*One-to-one counseling*

1.3.1 One-to-one counseling may be offered to any participant; however, high-risk participants shall receive at least one contact with a qualified nutritionist during their certification period. See ♦661—Competent Professional Authority: Appropriate Counseling for Risk Levels for more information.

*Self-guided education*

1.3.2 Self-guided education is an alternative form of 2<sup>nd</sup> nutrition education for participants who are not high risk. Self-guided education includes Self-Paced Lessons and Online Classes. See ♦823—Nutrition Education: Second Nutrition Education Using Online Classes and ♦824—Nutrition Education: Self-Paced Lessons for more information.

**NUTRITION EDUCATION: Making Education Available, cont.**

*(Self-guided education)*

1.3.2.1 Newsletters, nutrition education pamphlets, recipe cards, and other written information that staff provide to a participant, parent or caretaker shall be considered enhancements to nutrition education but not nutrition education contacts in and of themselves.

*Telephone contacts*

1.4 Telephone contacts may be used to provide second nutrition education to high risk participants who are unable to come to the clinic due to medical reasons and to high risk participants who have missed the original scheduled face-to-face appointment with the RD and rescheduling the appointment is not possible. See ♦821—Nutrition Education: Telephone Contacts for High Risk Clients with the RD for more information.

1.4.1 Telephone contacts may be quite helpful in responding to concerns of breastfeeding participants and in supporting breastfeeding, in providing education and guidance to a homebound participant or for a child with special health care needs.

*Scheduling nutrition education contacts*

2.0 Local programs shall make a reasonable effort to schedule nutrition education contacts at times and locations that enable participants to take part. The local program may want to consider implementing some or all of the following recommendations to overcome barriers to participating in nutrition education:

- 2.1 Offer evening and weekend educational contacts, particularly groups targeted to the larger participant populations, e.g., breastfeeding, infant feeding, toddler feeding, prenatal nutrition.
- 2.2 Offer more groups in satellite locations to help overcome transportation and time barriers for participants attending.
- 2.3 Work with other agencies such as OSU Extension, Head Start and adult education schools to provide nutrition education through other agencies and at different locations.
- 2.4 Develop a marketing program for nutrition education opportunities to emphasize the benefits to participants of taking part.

*Frequency of nutrition education*

3.0 During each six-month certification period, make available to WIC participants, parents or caretakers a minimum of two nutrition education contacts, scheduled at separate times. Education provided at the time of the initial certification is counted as one of the required contacts (see ♦820—Nutrition Education: Participant Contacts for the required topics that must be covered at the initial certification appointment).

**NUTRITION EDUCATION: Making Education Available, cont.**

- (Frequency of nutrition education)*
- 3.1 For participants who are certified for a period greater than six months, such as pregnant women, infants, and breastfeeding women, offer nutrition education on a quarterly basis, but not necessarily taking place within each quarter, to participants, parents or caretakers.
- Qualifications of staff providing nutrition education*
- 4.0 A staff member who provides individual nutrition education shall be, at a minimum, a CPA. See ♦660—Competent Professional Authority: Requirements.
- A staff member who provides group nutrition education shall be a CPA and shall complete, at a minimum, the training module “*Group Nutrition Education*” and the module appropriate to the target audience (e.g., “*Prenatal Nutrition*” for someone teaching a prenatal nutrition class).
- Staff providing nutrition education shall be supervised by a qualified nutritionist or a health professional. See ♦660—Competent Professional Authority: Requirements, for more information.
- Nutrition education provided by non-WIC programs*
- 5.0 Using an outside agency to provide nutrition education for participants may be beneficial to both the agencies and participants. Examples of outside agencies include OSU Extension Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP) and the Master Gardener Program. Ensuring coordination of care, communication and appropriateness of contacts are important issues to resolve. Refer to ♦830—Nutrition Education: Documentation for information on entering into an agreement with an outside agency.
- When local WIC programs enter into agreement with another agency to provide nutrition education:
- 5.1 The nutrition education contact shall relate to the participant’s nutritional risk(s) and individual nutrition needs, taking into account cultural and individual nutrition needs. High risk participants shall be seen by a registered dietitian at least once in the certification period. See ♦661—Competent Professional Authority: Appropriate Counseling for Risk Levels.
- 5.2 Document the nutrition education contact according to ♦830—Nutrition Education: Documentation.
- 5.3 Staff providing nutrition education shall be a health professional or be supervised by a qualified nutritionist or a health professional. See ♦660—Competent Professional Authority: Requirements.
- 5.4 Coordinate FI distribution according to ♦835—Nutrition Education: Attendance or Refusal.

**NUTRITION EDUCATION: Making Education Available, *cont.***

*(Nutrition education provided by non-WIC programs)*

5.5 There may be some instances in which nutrition education provided by an outside agency may not be counted toward the second nutrition education contact. For example, nutrition education provided by OSU Extension Oregon Family Nutrition Program (OFNP), also called Food Stamp Nutrition Education (FSNEP), **cannot** be used to meet the WIC program's required second nutrition education contact. OFNP/FSNEP funds **can** be used to support activities that **exceed** WIC's requirements for nutrition education and breastfeeding.

**Monitoring**

6.0 Local programs shall be reviewed for compliance with the federal and state regulations stated in this policy during monitoring visits by state program nutrition consultants. See ♦215—Local Program Monitoring and Review, ♦830—Nutrition Education: Documentation and ♦860—Nutrition Education: Monitoring for more information. ★

**REFERENCES:**

1. WIC Nutrition Services Committee, National Association of WIC Directors and U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service, *WIC Nutrition Services Standards* October 2001.

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