

Introduction to Risk Code Assignment

Objectives

After completing this lesson, you will be able to:

- ☞ Describe the different uses of risk codes in WIC clinics
- ☞ Identify the four groups of risk codes
- ☞ Describe how risk codes are selected for each participant

Overview

How is WIC different from other food assistance programs? WIC participants must have a nutrition need or risk to qualify for WIC services. WIC's goal is to use nutritious foods and nutrition education to improve participant's health and growth.

WIC focuses on:

- Reducing complications during pregnancy
- Decreasing the number of low birth weight and premature infants
- Improving the growth and development of young children
- Reducing iron deficiency anemia
- Increasing the number of breastfeeding mothers

The nutrition **risk factors** are key to WIC services. Each participant has a certification appointment to identify the nutrition risk factors. These risk factors are the basis for the personal services that WIC offers.

In the WIC clinic, nutrition risk factors are used to:

- Certify that participants are eligible for WIC
- Focus participants' nutrition education on their needs
- Determine participants at high risk
- Identify referrals needed for the participants

The nutrition risk criteria are standardized throughout the United States. The risk criteria are reviewed and recommended by a national group of health professionals under the auspices of the Institute of Medicine. The federal WIC office at the USDA requires state WIC programs to use these standardized risk codes.

What Are the Nutrition Risk Codes?

WIC's nutrition risk codes can be classified into four groups – anthropometric, biochemical, clinical/health/medical, and dietary. There are over 70 different risk codes.

Groups of Risk Codes	Description	Examples
Anthropometric	Based on a person's physical size	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Height▪ Weight▪ Rate of growth
Biochemical	Based on a blood test	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Anemia▪ Blood lead level
Clinical/Medical	Based on a person's health	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Chronic illness▪ Birth problems▪ Genetic conditions
Dietary	Based on feeding behaviors	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Inappropriate nutrition practices

Further information on clinical/medical and dietary risk codes can be found in the *Medical and Dietary Assessment Module*.

How Are Risk Codes Selected for the Participant?

Each participant is assigned nutrition risk codes during the certification appointment. These nutrition risk codes are selected based on the participant's medical data and health information. HuBERT is used to record the medical and health information and to select the risk code factors for each participant.

In HuBERT, there is a master list of all risk codes. Risk codes can be either HuBERT-assigned or CPA-assigned.

1. HuBERT-Assigned

- HuBERT automatically selects the risk code from the master list.
- HuBERT selects the risk code based on the information the CPA enters in the fields of height, weight and blood or health information screens.
- It is very important for the CPA to enter all information correctly so that correct risk codes will be selected by HuBERT.

Examples of HuBERT-Assigned Risk Codes

The CPA enters the height and weight of a participant. HuBERT calculates that the person is underweight and selects the risk code for “Underweight”.

The CPA enters an answer to the question about whether a woman is smoking during pregnancy. If she smokes, HuBERT automatically selects the risk code, “*Maternal Smoking*”.

2. CPA-Assigned

- Risk codes are selected from the master list by the CPA.
- The CPA selects the risk code based on information learned during certification.
- Risk codes are often CPA-assigned during the health and/or VENA Tab diet assessments.

Examples of CPA-Assigned Risk Codes

During the assessment, a woman says that she has diabetes. When the CPA enters the Health Information screen, the CPA will select the check box for ‘Diabetes Mellitus’.

During the certification appointment, a mother tells the CPA that her baby was born with a heart defect and will need surgery next month. The CPA selects the risk code “*Genetic and Congenital Disorders*” in the Risk Factor Tab.

3. Final Review

After the CPA and HuBERT have selected risk codes, the CPA must do a final review of all nutrition risk factors to make sure the correct ones were selected. This is done by reviewing the risk codes in the ‘Risk Factor’ screen in HuBERT. CPA-assigned risk codes can be added or removed in this screen. This step is very important to ensure that the risk codes identified by the CPA are correct and appropriate for the participant.

What information is Used to Select Risk Codes?

The information used to assess participants for nutrition risks comes from several places.

1. Collected by WIC staff

- WIC staff collects the information needed to assign the appropriate risk codes as part of the certification process.

Example

WIC staff measures and weighs participants. This provides the information needed to assign an anthropometric risk code.

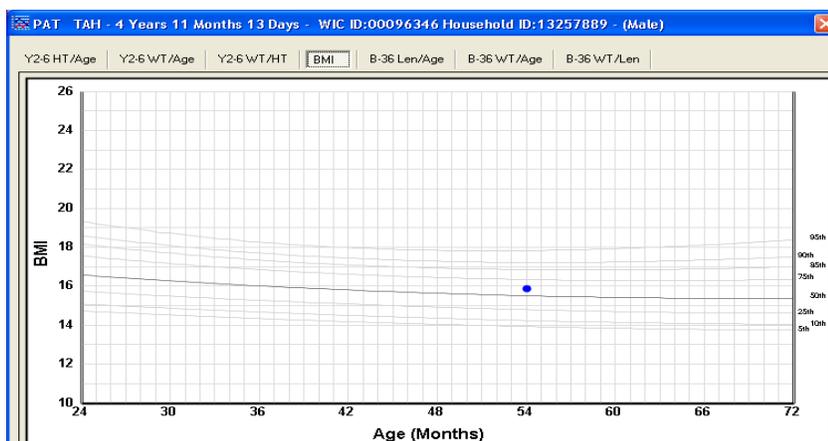
2. Historical Data

- For participants who are being recertified, WIC staff has information from previous certifications.

Certification History		Nutrition Education		Referrals		Income History		Benefits History		Appointments	
Demographics		Immunization		HT/WT/Blood		Food Prescription		Risk Factors		VENA	
Height/Weight											
Measurement Date	Age at Measurement	Inches	Eighths	Measurement Position	Pounds	Ounces	Body Mass Index	Height/Weight Blood			
08/09/2010	2 Years 0 Months 17 Days	33	6	Standing	36	4	16.2				
02/09/2010	1 Year 6 Months 16 Days	31	4	Recumbent	23	3	16.4				
08/07/2009	1 Year 0 Months 15 Days	28	7	Recumbent	18	9	15.6				
04/23/2009	0 Years 9 Months 0 Days	27	5	Recumbent	16	2	14.8				
08/11/2008	0 Years 0 Months 19 Days	20	1	Recumbent	7	4	12.6				

Example

HuBERT keeps track of the weight gain of a child over several visits to WIC. This information is used to determine if the child is growing at the appropriate rate for their age.



3. Information from a Health Care Provider

- WIC participants might bring information from their health care provider about their medical history which could be used to assign a risk code.

Example

An infant has a prescription for a special formula which also lists information about the infant's medical diagnosis. This information is then used to enter a clinical/medical risk code.

4. Self-Reported by Participant

- WIC allows participants to self-report that their doctor has diagnosed them with a health condition.
- It is important to determine that a doctor has diagnosed a health condition, not that the participant just believes that she has the condition.
- It is **not** required to have a note from the doctor stating the diagnosis.
- Specific questions to ask the participant when they self-report a health condition include:
 - Are you seeing a doctor for the condition?
 - How long have you had this condition?
 - Can we contact your doctor to find out more about your condition? (Make sure to get a signed release of information.)
 - What type of medication are you taking for the condition?
 - Has your doctor prescribed a special diet for this condition?

Example

Following is an example of how the CPA can find out more information about a self-reported medical condition.

Joan is at WIC to be enrolled as a pregnant woman. This is part of her conversation with the CPA during the health history assessment.

CPA: *Do you have any medical or health problems now or did you have any problems with previous pregnancies?*

Joan: *Yes.*

CPA: *What type of problems?*

Joan: *I have high blood pressure.*

CPA: *Can you tell me more about it?*

Joan: *Last week I used the machine at Walgreen's and it said my blood pressure was high.*

CPA: *When was the last time you met with your doctor?*

Joan: *I haven't seen the doctor in about a month.*

CPA: *When is your next appointment with your doctor?*

Joan: *Tomorrow.*

CPA: *Let us know if your doctor says that your blood pressure is too high.*

Joan: *OK.*

CPA: *Do you have any other health or medical problems?*

Joan: *No.*

Result: Although Joan was enrolled in WIC with other risk factors, she would not qualify for the risk code for *Hypertension*, because she was not diagnosed by a physician for the problem

However, if Joan had said: “My doctor said at my last appointment that I have high blood pressure,” then she would have qualified for the risk code for *Hypertension*.

“High Risk” Risk Codes

All WIC participants are at nutritional risk, but some participants are at a greater risk than others for poor nutrition-related health outcomes. “High risk” in WIC designates participants who have a nutrition risk that puts them at high risk and for whom an Individual Nutrition Care Plan (INCP) is required.

Each state WIC agency is allowed to determine which nutrition risks are to be considered “high risk”. The Institute of Medicine (IOM) recommends that nutrition risks that have a strong relationship to risk and potential to benefit from the services of the WIC Program be considered high risk.

For information on counseling high risk participants, please review *The High Risk Counseling Guide*.

Summary

Assigning the appropriate nutrition risk codes is a key to WIC's service. A good assessment of the participant's health and nutrition status gives a more complete picture of their nutrition needs. When all risk codes are identified, it helps to focus the nutrition education in a manner that will best assist the participant in improving their health.



Skill Check-#1

1. What are the four groups of nutrition risk codes?
2. What are the 2 ways risk codes are assigned?
3. When are risk codes CPA-selected?
4. What information is used to assign risk codes?
5. What type of information requires careful questioning by the CPA?

Final Skill Check

1. Nutrition risk codes can help identify referrals that the participant may need. T F
2. Each state determines the risk code criteria used in that state. T F
3. There are five different groups of risk codes. T F
4. The requirement that all participants must have a risk code makes the WIC program different from other food assistance programs. T F
5. The four groups of nutrition risk codes are: anthropometric, medical, dietary, and other. T F
6. The risk code for “Lactose Intolerance” should be assigned for a child when the mother reports that the child seems to have difficulty digesting milk. T F
7. Only information collected by WIC staff can be used to assign anthropometric risk codes. T F
8. A high blood lead level is an example of a medical risk code. T F
9. Anthropometric risk codes are based on a person’s physical size. T F
10. Biochemical risk codes are based only on results from blood tests. T F

Supplementary Materials

List of Risk Code Numbers and Names

Here is a list of all risk code numbers and their names.

100s

- 101 *Underweight (Women)*
- 103 *Underweight or at-Risk of (Infants and Children)*
- 111 *Overweight (Women)*
- 113 *Overweight (children over 2 years)*
- 114 *At Risk of Becoming Overweight (Children over 2 years)*
- 121 *Short Stature*
- 131 *Low maternal Weight Gain*
- 132 *Maternal Weight Loss During Pregnancy*
- 133 *High maternal Weight Gain*
- 134 *Failure to Thrive (FTT)*
- 135 *Slow Weight Gain*
- 141 *Low Birth Weight (LBW)*
- 142 *Prematurity*
- 151 *Small for Gestational Age (SGA)*
- 153 *Large for Gestational Age (LGA)*

200s

- 201 *Low Hemoglobin/Low Hematocrit*
- 211 *Elevated Blood Lead Levels*

300s

- 301 *Hyperemesis Gravidarum*
- 302 *Gestational Diabetes*
- 303 *History of Gestational Diabetes*
- 311 *History of Preterm Delivery*
- 312 *History of Low Birth Weight (LBW)*
- 321 *History of Fetal or Neonatal Loss*
- 331 *Pregnancy at a Young Age*
- 332 *Closely Spaced Pregnancy*
- 333 *High Parity and Young Age*
- 334 *Lack of Adequate Prenatal Care*
- 335 *Multifetal Gestation*
- 336 *Fetal Growth Restriction*
- 337 *History of a Birth of a Large for Gestational Age Infant*
- 338 *Pregnant Woman Currently Breastfeeding*

- 339 *History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect*
- 341 *Nutrient Deficiency Diseases*
- 342 *Gastro-Intestinal Disorders*
- 343 *Diabetes Mellitus*
- 345 *Hypertension*
- 346 *Renal Disease*
- 347 *Cancer*
- 348 *Central Nervous System Disorders*
- 349 *Genetic and Congenital Disorders*
- 350 *Pyloric Stenosis*
- 351 *Inborn Errors of Metabolism*
- 352 *Infectious Diseases*
- 353 *Food Allergies*
- 354 *Celiac Disease*
- 355 *Lactose Intolerance*
- 356 *Hypoglycemia*
- 357 *Drug Nutrient Interactions*
- 358 *Eating Disorders*
- 359 *Recent Major Surgery, Trauma or Burns*
- 360 *Other Medical Conditions*
- 362 *Developmental, Sensory, or Motor Delays Interfering with Eating*
- 371 *Maternal Smoking*
- 372 *Alcohol or Illegal and/ or Illicit Drug use*
- 381 *Dental Problems*
- 382 *Fetal Alcohol Syndrome (FAS)*

400s

- 401 *Failure to Meet Dietary Guidelines*
- 411 *Inappropriate Infant Feeding Practices*
- 425 *Inappropriate Feeding Practices for Children*
- 427 *Inappropriate Nutrition Practices for Women*
- 428 *Inappropriate Complementary Feeding Practices*

500s

- 501 *Possibility of Regression*
- 502 *Transfer of Certification*

600s

- 601 *Breastfeeding Mother of Infant at Nutritional Risk*
- 602 *Breastfeeding Complications (Woman)*
- 603 *Breastfeeding Complications (Infant)*

700s

- 701 *Infant Born to WIC Mom or WICV-Eligible Mom*
- 702 *Breastfeeding Infant of Woman at Nutritional Risk*
- 703 *Infant of Woman with Alcohol or Drug Use or Mental Retardation*

800s

- 801 *Homelessness*
- 802 *Migrancy*

900s

- 901 *Recipient of Abuse*
- 902 *Woman or Primary Caregiver with Limited Ability to Make Feeding Decisions and/or Prepare Food*
- 903 *Foster Care*
- 904 *Environmental Tobacco Smoke Exposure (ETS)*

Disease Names and Risk Codes

Use this resource to find the Risk Code for a specific disease.

For this condition:	Use this Risk Code (RC):
AIDS	RC 352- <i>Infectious Disease</i>
Anencephaly	RC 348- <i>Central Nervous System Disorders</i> RC 339- <i>History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>
Autism	RC 362 – <i>Developmental, Sensory or Motor Delays Interfering with Eating</i>
Anemia	RC 201- <i>Low Hematocrit/Low Hemoglobin</i>
Anorexia Nervosa	RC 358- <i>Eating Disorders</i>
Arthritis	RC 360- <i>Other Medical Conditions</i>
Asthma	RC 360- <i>Other Medical Conditions</i>
Baby Bottle Tooth Decay	RC 381- <i>Dental Problems</i>
Bowel Resection	RC 342- <i>Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Brain Damage	RC 362- <i>Developmental, Sensory or Motor Delays Interfering with Eating</i>
Branched Chain Ketoaciduria	RC 351- <i>Inborn Errors of Metabolism</i>
Bronchial Asthma	RC 360- <i>Other Medical Conditions</i>
Bronchiolitis	RC 352 – <i>Infectious Diseases</i>
Bulimia	RC 358 – <i>Eating Disorders</i>
C-section	RC 359 – <i>Recent Major Surgery, Trauma or Burns</i>
Cancer	RC 347 – <i>Cancer</i>
Cardiorespiratory Diseases	RC 360 – <i>Other Medical Conditions</i>
Celiac Disease	RC 354- <i>Celiac Disease</i>
Celiac Sprue	RC 354 – <i>Celiac Disease</i>
Cerebral Palsy	RC 348 – <i>Central Nervous System Disorders</i>
Cesarean	RC 359- <i>Recent Major Surgery, Trauma or Burns</i>
Cholecystitis	RC 342- <i>Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Cholelithiasis	RC 342 – <i>Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Cleft Lip or Palate	RC 349- <i>Genetic and Congenital Disorders</i> RC 339 – <i>History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>
Crohn's Disease	RC 342 – <i>Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Cystic Fibrosis	RC 360 – <i>Other Medical Conditions</i>
Depression	RC 361 – <i>Depression</i> RC 902 – <i>Woman/Primary Caregiver with Limited Ability to Make Feeding Decisions</i>

For this condition:	Use this Risk Code (RC):
Developmental Disorders	<i>RC 362 – Developmental, Sensory or Motor Delays Interfering with Eating</i>
Diabetes Mellitus (Type 1 or Type 2)	<i>RC 343 – Diabetes Mellitus</i>
Down Syndrome	<i>RC 349 – Genetic and Congenital Disorders</i>
Epilepsy	<i>RC 348 – Central Nervous System Disorders</i>
Failure to Thrive	<i>RC 134 – Failure to Thrive (FTT)</i>
Fetal Alcohol Syndrome	<i>RC 382 – Fetal Alcohol Syndrome</i>
Fetal Growth Restriction	<i>RC 336 – Fetal Growth Restriction</i>
Food Allergy	<i>RC 353 – Food Allergies</i>
Galactosemia	<i>RC 351 – Inborn Errors of Metabolism</i>
Gallbladder Disease	<i>RC 342 – gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Gestation Disease	<i>RC 302- Gestational Diabetes or RC 303 History of Gestational Diabetes</i>
Gingivitis of Pregnancy	<i>RC 381 – Dental Problems</i>
Gluten Enteropathy	<i>RC 354 – Celiac Disease</i>
Gluten Sensitivity	<i>RC 354 – Celiac Disease</i>
Heart Disease	<i>RC 360 – Other Medical Conditions</i>
Hepatitis	<i>RC 352 – Infectious Diseases</i>
High Blood Pressure	<i>RC 345 – Hypertension</i>
HIV	<i>RC 352 – Infectious Diseases</i>
Hyperemesis Gravidarum	<i>RC 301- Hyperemesis Gravidarum</i>
Hypertension	<i>RC 345 – Hypertension</i>
Hypoglycemia	<i>RC 356 – Hypoglycemia</i>
Inflammatory Bowel Disease	<i>RC 342 – Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Intrauterine Growth Restriction	<i>RC 336 – Fetal Growth Restriction</i>
IUGR	<i>RC 336 – Fetal Growth Restriction</i>
Juvenile Rheumatoid Arthritis (JRA)	<i>RC 360- Other Medical Conditions</i>
Kidney Disease	<i>RC 346 – Renal Disease</i>
Lactose Intolerance	<i>RC 355 – Lactose Intolerance</i>
Elevated Blood Lead Levels	<i>RC 211 – Elevated Blood Lead Levels</i>
Liver Disease	<i>RC 342- Gastro-Intestinal Disorders or RC 352 – Infectious Disease (Hepatitis)</i>
Lupus Erythematosus	<i>RC 360 – Other Medical Conditions</i>
Malabsorption Syndrome	<i>RC 342 – Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Malnutrition	<i>RC 342 – Nutrient Deficiency Diseases</i>
Maple Sugar Urine Disease (MSUD)	<i>RC 351 – Inborn Errors of Metabolism</i>
Metabolic Diseases	<i>RC 351 – Inborn Errors of Metabolism</i>

For This Condition:	Use this Risk Code (RC):
Meningitis	RC 352 – <i>Infectious Diseases</i>
Meningocele	RC 348 – <i>Central Nervous System Disorder</i> RC 339- <i>History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>
Mentally Delayed	RC 902 – <i>Woman/Primary Caregiver with Limited Ability to Make Feeding Decisions and/or Prepare Food</i>
Multiple Sclerosis	RC 348 – <i>Central Nervous System Disorders</i>
Myelomeningocele	RC 348 - <i>entral Nervous Systemn Disorders</i> RC 339 – <i>History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>
Necrotizing Enterocolitis (NEC)	RC 342 – <i>Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Neural Tube Defects (NTD)	RC 348 – <i>Central Nervous System Disorders</i> RC 339 – <i>History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>
Non-tropical sprue	RC 354 – <i>Celiac Disease</i>
Occulta	RC 348 – <i>Central Nervous System Disorders</i> RC 339 – <i>History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>
Parasites	RC 352 – <i>Infectious Diseases</i>
Panceratitis	RC 342 – <i>Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Parkinson’s Disease	RC 342 – <i>Central Nervous Systems Disorders</i>
Periodontal Disease	RC 381 – <i>Dental Problems</i>
Persistent Proteinuria	RC 346 – <i>Renal Disease</i>
Phenylketonuria (PKU)	RC 351 – <i>Inborn Errors of Metabolism</i>
PIH	RC 345 – <i>Hypertension</i>
Pinworm	RC 352 – <i>Infectious Diseases</i>
PKU	RC 351 – <i>Inborn Errors of Metabolism</i>
Pneumonia	RC 352 – <i>Infectious Diseases</i>
Polycystic Kidney Disease	RC 346 – <i>Renal Disease</i>
Prenancy Induced Hypertension	RC 345 – <i>Hypertension</i>
Pre-eclampsia	RC 345 – <i>Hypertension</i>
Projectile Vomiting	RC 350 – <i>Pyloric Stenosis</i>
Protein Energy Malnutrition	RC 341 – <i>Nutrient Deficiency Diseases</i>
Proteinuria	RC 346 – <i>Renal Disease</i>
Rheumatoid Arthritis	RC 360 – <i>Other Medical Conditions</i>
Rickets	RC 341 – <i>Nutrient Deficiency Diseases</i>
Scurvy	RC 341 – <i>Nutrient Deficiency Diseases</i>
Short Bowel Syndrome	RC 342 – <i>Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Sickle Cell Anemia	RC 349 – <i>Genetic and Congenital Disorders</i>

For This Condition:	Use this Risk Code (RC):
Small Bowel Enterocolitis	<i>RC 342 – Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Small Bowel Syndrome	<i>RC 342 – Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Small for Gestational Age	<i>RC 151 – Small for Gestational Age (SGA)</i>
Spina Bifida	<i>RC 348 – Central Nervous System Disorders RC 339 – History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>
Tapeworm	<i>RC 353 – Infectious Diseases</i>
TB	<i>RC 352 – Infectious Diseases</i>
Thalassemia	<i>RC 349 -0 Genetic and Congenital Disorders</i>
Toxemia	<i>RC 345 – Hypertension</i>
Tuberculosis	<i>RC 352 – Infectious Diseases</i>
Type 1 Diabetes	<i>RC 343 – Diabetes Mellitus</i>
Type 2 Diabetes	<i>RC 343 – Diabetes Mellitus</i>
Ulcerative Colitis	<i>RC 342 – Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Ulcers	<i>RC 342 – Gastro-Intestinal Disorders</i>
Vitamin A Excess	<i>RC 339 – History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>
Zinc Deficiency	<i>RC 339 – History of a Birth with a Congenital Birth Defect</i>