Subject: Additional Nutrition Education

References: 7CFR 246.11(e)(2)

Policy: Provide additional nutrition education during the certification period.

Purpose: To ensure that additional nutrition education is made available to all participants throughout their certification period.

Definitions:

Additional Nutrition Education - Education contacts that occur at a time other than the certification appointment.

Contact - A contact is an interaction between the nutrition educator and the participant to explore opportunities for behavior change, to provide anticipatory guidance and to address areas of nutrition risk.

Procedures:

This policy describes additional nutrition education contacts for participants who do not meet the High Risk Criteria. See High Risk Individual Nutrition Care Plans, Section 6.6.

- Content of additional nutrition education contacts:
  - Is based on the participant’s nutritional needs and category (i.e., risks, participant concerns, and anticipatory guidance).
  - Includes follow-up to medical referrals and other referrals as needed. See Referrals, Section 5.7.
  - Includes “Postpartum Exit Counseling” provided to breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women who will not be eligible for WIC at the end of their current certification. This education should include:
    - The importance of preconceptual folic acid intake in reducing neural tube defects
    - Encouragement to continue breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding
    - The importance of immunizations for children
    - The health risks associated with the use of alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs
    - The need for a well balanced diet
    - Referrals as appropriate
• **Number** of *additional nutrition education* contacts is based on the length of the certification period.
  o For participants certified for a period *greater than 6 months*, nutrition education contacts shall be made available at a rate equivalent to quarterly. This includes the education provided at the initial certification; see Initial Education, Section 6.3, and mid-certification appointments see Mid-Certification, Section 5.10.
    ▪ For example: A child certified for one year will receive an initial contact at certification, an educational contact at mid-certification and two *additional nutrition education* contacts. This provides 4 contacts in the one year certification period.
  o Participants certified for a period of *six months or less* should be provided a minimum of one *additional nutrition education* contact, in addition to the *initial contact* at certification.
    ▪ For example: Pregnant women certified for more than one month must be offered *additional nutrition education* before their due date.

• **Delivery methods/mediums** for *additional nutrition education* should be interactive and accommodate individual learning styles and needs. Types may include:
  o **Individual**: Nutrition education provided to the participant/parent/guardian or proxy based on the unique needs of the participant and/or interests. Individual contacts may be provided in person, by phone or video calls.
  o **Group**: A class or facilitated discussion with a qualified instructor. The group contact should be relevant to the participant’s category.
  o **Self-Guided**: Pre-approved computer-based nutrition education or other interactive media. This option requires that the participant be given the opportunity to interact with a CPA to discuss the content of the self-guided contact and to ask questions. The CPA should follow-up on any goals or strategies that the participant identified at the end of the self-guided contact.
  o **Other methods** as described and approved in the local agency Nutrition Education Plan.

• **Documentation** of *additional nutrition education* should promote continuity of care. Follow documentation procedures as outlined in the local agency Nutrition Education Plan. See Section 6.8, Nutrition Education Documentation.

• **Maintain confidentiality**: Individual contacts should be conducted in a private area rather than in a public waiting room. Participants should not be asked to share private, confidential information in a public or group setting.

• **Missed Contacts**: If an *additional nutrition education* contact is missed and can not be rescheduled during the current benefit period due to the participant/parent/guardian’s availability, issue one month of benefits and schedule the contact for the following month. If the participant/parent/guardian refuses nutrition education, document that in their record.
Guidance:

- **Create and offer options to reduce barriers to nutrition education.** Transportation, childcare, and work obligations can make it difficult for families to participate in nutrition education activities. **Education Choice** allows participants to choose how they would like to receive nutrition education at follow-up visits. Options include education by telephone, video call, self-guided modules, or in a WIC clinic.

- **Timing of contacts:** Additional nutrition education contacts should be provided at a rate equivalent to quarterly, but not necessarily every 3 months. Consider the needs of the participant when scheduling their follow-up. For example, a CPA may choose to provide an additional nutrition education contact one month after an infant’s initial certification to support continued breastfeeding, rather than waiting three months.

- **Additional Education provided by an outside entity:** An outside entity may provide additional nutrition education for participants if the following criteria are met:
  - The additional nutrition education content is appropriate for the individual’s nutritional risks and nutritional interests, the encounter is within the current WIC certification period, and the education is documented.
  - Services provided by staff from an outside entity must be within their scope of practice.
  - WIC CPA staff should be present in the area to respond to questions that are beyond the scope of knowledge/practice of the outside entity staff person.
  - Lesson plans written by the outside entity for the additional nutrition education contacts should be reviewed and approved by the local agency Nutrition Education Coordinator.
  - If an outside entity staff person is used for providing additional nutrition education, local agencies are encouraged to enter into an annual agreement with the entity addressing the following roles/expectations:
    - Time period the agreement covers.
    - Responsibilities of the staff from the outside entity: e.g., day(s) of month staff will provide contacts; topic(s); length of clinic day; arrangements for backup, if staff is unable to attend the WIC clinic, and assurance that participant confidentiality will be maintained.
    - WIC responsibilities: providing space, setting up the room, communication regarding schedule changes and materials, CPA staff present to answer participant questions.
  - The contacts should be documented per the local agency documentation procedures. See Nutrition Education Documentation policy, **Section 6.8.**