Subject: Additional Education

References: 246.11(e)(2)

Policy: Provide additional nutrition education during the certification period.

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

Definitions:

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:

Procedures for all participants:

- Additional Education should:
  - Be based on the participant’s nutritional needs (i.e.: risks, concerns of the participant, and anticipatory guidance needs).
  - Include interaction with a CPA or other educator. Written or audiovisual material alone is usually not sufficient. See Guidance for additional information.
  - Include follow-up to medical referrals and other referrals as needed. See Referral Policy, Section 5.7
- Additional Education may be provided through individual contacts, group sessions or other methods as approved in the local agency nutrition education plan. Each method should maintain the confidentiality of the participant, e.g., one-to-one, individualized contacts should be conducted in a private area rather than in a public waiting area; and participants should not be asked to share private, confidential information in a group setting.
- Participants may not be denied supplemental foods for failure to attend or participate in additional education.
- If a participant misses an additional education contact, reschedule the contact and issue vouchers for a month.
- Document additional education in the participant’s record. See Nutrition Education Documentation Policy, Section 6.8

Procedures for High Risk participants: See High Risk Individual Nutrition Care Plan Policy, Section 6.6.

Procedure for Infants:

- Nutrition education for infants must be provided to the parent or caregiver at a rate equivalent to quarterly, generally at initial certification, mid-certification and other additional education contacts as needed based on age at initial certification (see below).
Infants certified before three months of age should receive four nutrition education contacts before the first birthday. See Suggested Infant Education Contact Schedule. Exhibit 6-E.

- A nutrition education infant contact early in the certification period (e.g., one month after certification) can support continued breastfeeding.
- The need for follow-up should be considered when determining the rate of voucher issuance (monthly, bi-monthly, or tri-monthly).

Infants certified after six months of age require one infant contact before the next recertification.

Individualized one-to-one education must be provided to the parent/caregiver at the time of certification and mid-certification. The other infant contacts may be provided through individual contacts, group sessions or other methods as approved in the local agency nutrition education plan.

Procedures for all other participants:

- Participants who do not receive additional education as a high-risk individual nutrition care plan or infant contact should be provided additional education contacts. Additional education contacts must occur at a time other than the initial certification visit and before the next certification.
  - Participants certified for a period six months or less should be provided a minimum of one additional education contact.
  - For participants certified for a period in excess of six months, nutrition education contacts shall be made available at a rate equivalent to quarterly. This includes the education at the initial certification and mid-certification appointment.

- Types of contacts:
  - Individual counseling or discussion session that provides information specific to that participant’s risk conditions.
  - Individual interactive discussion of a newsletter or educational pamphlet that involves a qualified educator. The newsletter or pamphlet must be appropriate to the category and needs of the participant.
  - A group or class that is appropriate to the category and needs of the participant.
  - Other methods as approved in the local agency nutrition education plan.

- The contact should be related to the nutritional needs of the participant. (A class does not need to address a specific risk factor of the participant, but the content must be of some potential use to the participant.)

- See Guidance for specific information regarding additional education contacts for postpartum women.

Guidance:

- **Additional Education contacts by phone/video calls:** Additional education may be provided by phone/video calls. The contact should be comprised of an interactive discussion between the CPA and the participant/parent/caregiver. Phone/video calls may be used to provide nutrition education, and offer some flexibility in the circumstances identified below.
  - Examples of times when additional education by phone/video calls may be appropriate:
- The participant missed the scheduled additional education contact for *staff reasons* (e.g., CPA staff unavailable due to illness) or *participant reasons* (e.g., illness, imminent childbirth, transportation difficulties, inclement weather, or unable to come in to WIC due to work schedule, appointment conflicts, or family obligations) and the additional education contact cannot be rescheduled.

- The local agency mails or delivers vouchers to better manage clinic or to improve participant access and/or retention. See Alternative Voucher Issuance Methods, Section 8.4.
  - The content of the phone/video call should be based on the participant’s nutritional needs and/or concerns identified on the call or at the last certification/recertification. Referrals should be provided as appropriate. The content of the contact should be documented per the local agency’s documentation procedures.

- **Additional Education provided by an outside entity**: An outside entity may provide additional education for participants if the following criteria are met:
  - The additional education contact provided by the outside entity 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 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 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; if staff is sick and unable to attend the WIC clinic, who will provide backup; and assurance that participant confidentiality will be maintained.
    - WIC responsibilities: e.g., 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

- **Self-guided education contacts**: Self-guided education includes pre-approved computer-based nutrition education or other interactive media. Additional education may be self-guided if the following criteria are met:
  - The participant does not require a high-risk contact.
  - The contact is appropriate for the individual’s needs, the encounter is within the current WIC certification period and the education is documented.
  - The participant is 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.
Procedures for Postpartum Women (Breastfeeding and Non-Breastfeeding):

- Postpartum Exit Counseling: Postpartum women who will not be eligible for the WIC Program at the end of their current certification should be provided “postpartum exit counseling” as their additional education contact.
- This education may be offered as individual or group education and should include printed materials.
- The education and/or printed information should include information on the following topics:
  - The importance of preconceptual folic acid intake in reducing neural tube defects;
  - Continued 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; and,
  - Referrals as appropriate.

The participant’s need for additional education and participant’s preferences should be considered when determining the rate of voucher issuance (monthly, bi-monthly, or tri-monthly). Tri-monthly voucher issuance is appropriate for most participants. Generally, a participant can be on tri-monthly voucher issuance unless s/he needs to return to clinic more frequently because of nutritional concerns or inappropriate use of vouchers. When determining the rate of voucher issuance, the following should be considered:

- Infant contacts must be offered at a rate equal to quarterly, but not necessarily in every quarter. Contacts can and should be adjusted to meet the nutrition education and assessment needs of the infant. For the breastfed infant the early postpartum period is a time when questions and concerns related to breastfeeding may lead to cessation. The CPA should determine how frequently the breastfed family needs to be seen based on the infant’s age, the mother’s experience, other support systems available to the mother, and how well breastfeeding is going. It may be most appropriate to schedule breastfed infants for monthly voucher issuance and individual follow-up. Once the CPA has determined that breastfeeding is well established and the mother’s questions and concerns are addressed, the family may be switched to multi-monthly voucher issuance.
- If a participant is placed on monthly or bi-monthly issuance, s/he should receive meaningful education at the voucher pickups. Local agencies are discouraged from scheduling “monthly weight checks” unless the weight check includes an assessment of weight progress and interaction with a qualified educator.
- Participants who miss or do not attend their next scheduled additional education contact should be issued one month’s vouchers and be re-scheduled in the following month for the additional education contact.

Use of non-CPA WIC staff for Additional Education: WIC staff who are not CPAs may be utilized to provide nutrition education activities on a limited basis, to assist or expand the efforts of the CPA staff. Nutrition Education activities will be limited to
providing additional education to parents of low-risk children who do not require an INCP. Peers provide valuable breastfeeding support, however these contacts do not replace additional education contacts. See CPA policies in Chapter 4.

- Qualifications of these individuals will vary depending on the resources and/or circumstances of the local agency (e.g., may include local agency health educator staff).
- Any non-CPA WIC staff providing nutrition education should:
  - Be familiar with the social and economic conditions of the specific community they are serving.
  - Be familiar with the cultural patterns and practices of the specific community they are serving.
  - Complete training in the areas of nutrition for which they will be providing educational activities.
  - Communicate effectively.

- Roles of the non-CPA are limited to:
  - Presenting basic nutrition information prepared or approved by the Nutrition Education Coordinator. Nutrition information will be presented only under the on-site supervision of the Nutrition Education Coordinator or their designated CPA staff member.
  - Referring all questions outside their scope of knowledge to the Nutrition Education Coordinator or designated CPA staff member.