



**Welcome to the Minnesota WIC Program  
Participant-Centered Webinar Series**

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Karen Deehy, MS, RD  
Senior Associate



**Welcome**

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**Guidelines**

- ▲ Phones on mute
- ▲ Raise hands
- ▲ Chat box



**The Plan**

- ▲ **Topic area: Discussing Weight**
- ▲ **The challenge**
- ▲ **Strategies to approach conversations about weight**

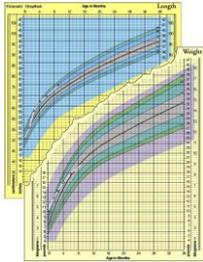
**The Challenge**



**Why Discuss Weight?**

- **Women**
  - Conception challenges
  - Pregnancy challenges (pre-eclampsia, GDM, etc.)
  - Health issues (cardiac, joint, etc.)
  - Self-esteem / Prevents other healthy behaviors
- **Infants and Children**
  - Feeding issues
  - Growth issues, failure to thrive
  - Health issues
  - Self-esteem / Prevents other healthy behaviors

## Weight Gain/Growth Grids



- Assessment tool
- Counseling tool



## Growth Charts - Effective

- When parents or pregnant women show interest.
- When parents have questions or are concerned.
- When there has been a big change in BMI.
- When you feel it will add value to the conversation or increase understanding.
- To give reassurance to breastfeeding mom's that their children are gaining appropriately.
- It is always good information for parents and participants to visualize.



## Growth Charts - Ineffective

- When parents are not interested and are very guarded around weight.
- When you ask if they want to see the charts and they say no.
- When the client is already well aware of their or their child's weight issue.
- If parents are already aware of a concern due to conversations with other professionals.
- When they are not interested in change.



## Tips and Strategies - Asking

- Ask people about their goals for weight gain and children's weight, how they feel about it and questions they might have.
- If BMI has increased I ask what changes have occurred lately that might be contributing to the increase.
- I like to ask, "how do you feel about your child's growth?"
- Finding out what they've been told by other providers first.



## Poll Question



What is your initial question for parents?



## Explaining Growth Charts

- Sometimes they are above or below and consistently following the same curve, it is normal for them.
- This chart is showing how your child compares with others at his/her age.
- Ask parent's if they know about BMI and what it means and show them where their child is. Ask what questions they have about this and go from there. I may say your child's weight/proportion is plotting above the normal range for their age.



## Explaining Growth Charts

- When looking at Jimmy's growth pattern his weight has started to increase/decrease at a faster/slower pace than his height.
- Explain what percentiles are (i.e. 100% isn't the best) and emphasize the overall pattern. May use phrases like: "Growing faster in height than weight" or "gaining more weight recently than we might expect".



## Offering a Concern

- Ask permission
- Emphasize autonomy
- Ask for input



## Cultivating Empathy and Non-Judgment



- Fat
- Skinny
- Overweight
- Obese
- Too heavy



## Prenatal Weight Gain Discussions

- Higher prenatal weight gain is associated with higher postpartum weight retention.
- Women are likely to get pregnant again without taking off all the weight from the previous pregnancy.
- This process can lead to obesity.



## Tips and Strategies – Pregnant Women

- With pregnant women, talking about their concerns related to losing the baby weight after delivery helps them focus on how their weight gain during pregnancy will contribute to more or less weight to lose later.
- For pregnant woman, I like to ask if there are any concerns in regards to nutrition or health.
- Open-ended questions on how do you feel about your weight during this pregnancy?



## Postpartum – to ask or not to ask?

- I do not ever mention weight post-partum unless a mom asks me about it.
- I often see them so soon after delivery that I don't bring it up.



## Framing the Question

- Ask “[what are] any goals you have for weight loss after pregnancy?”
- Ask them how they are feeling about their recovering body from pregnancy instead of "are you happy with your weight?", or ask what has been the biggest struggle with weight loss or exercise. Ask them what their comfortable weight is and if they are actively working to reach a goal.
- Any concerns with the weight you gained during your pregnancy?



## Framing the Question

- I don't focus on the number or their "ideal" body weight. What is the weight or size where they feel happy and comfortable? What's realistic and what can they do to reach that goal?
- First, asking them what their goals are as far as weight. Meet them at their goal rather than telling them what the recommended weight would be for her.



## Poll Question



How would you frame the question?



## Signs of Resistance



## Signs of Resistance

- The Doctor says he/she is fine.
- “He is just stocky”, “He has always been big.”
- When parents/caregiver is extremely overweight themselves, they seem to shut down immediately.
- A change in mannerism or tone of voice. Defensiveness.
- Arms crossed, no eye contact, short answers.



## PCS Skill: Reflecting Resistance



- ▲ You're not concerned about his growth.
- ▲ Weight is not an issue for you right now.
- ▲ You'd rather focus on eating healthy foods and not a number on the scale.

## Shifting Focus



## Reading the Signs is Not Always Easy



## Poll Question



How would you respond?



## Building Importance

- Questions
- Reflections
- Affirmations



## Focus on Behaviors and Habits

- Asking them if there is anything they'd want to change about their eating habits or their child's eating habits because that often ties to the weight gain.
- I like to discuss with parents the ways they can make a positive impact on their child's weight and how their child can still "grow into" their weight.
- From birth to 5 is when kids learn the most, and changing habit after that will be more difficult.



## Goal Setting Questions

- I always ask, "What is one thing that you could change in your diet or habits that you think would help you lose weight?" Then we talk about how that could look and fit into their life.
- Asking women is there is anything they are working on with their health and goals for them and their families health and eating.
- Ask what they dream for their child - tie it to weight control, active lifestyle



## More Suggestions for Goals-Setting

- Small, obtainable goals are best.
- Instead of focusing on weight loss, focus on healthy food and beverage choices, as well as physical activity once the mom is given the "ok" from their medical team.
- Open ended questions about goals and motivations. Use reflections and affirmations to strengthen change talk. Focus on lifestyle changes to improve health vs. a specific weight loss goal.



## More Suggestions for Goals-Setting

- Make it their own plan. What works for them?
- Remind them the weight won't all come off at once, for most women the weight comes off slowly, encourage healthy eating, activity, and breastfeeding!
- Remind them how long they grew the baby/gained weight and the normal timeline for losing weight healthfully. Affirm that it is normal to take your time losing weight.



## What Messages are We Sending?



## Time to Share



- Questions
- Strategies
- Tips for discussing weight

