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**DATE:** August 18, 2021  
**TO:** Local Agency Staff  
**FROM:** State WIC Staff  
**SUBJECT:** Purpose of the Nutrition Assessment: Second in a Series

While CPAs are aware that a Nutrition Assessment is a part of WIC appointments, some may wonder *why* we complete a Nutrition Assessment. In this second memo in the series on Nutrition Assessment, we will provide more information on the purpose of the Nutrition Assessment.

The Nutrition Assessment is an essential part of a WIC appointment. The Nutrition Assessment is one component in determining eligibility of the applicant and serves as the foundation for all subsequent nutrition contacts.

The Nutrition Assessment allows CPAs to:

- **Collect relevant information.** Collecting different types of information allows the CPA to get an overall picture of the participant's health and nutrition status, resulting in more customized WIC services. Entering this information into the WIC Information System will enable other staff to review the participant's record and begin the next assessment with a better understanding of the participant's circumstances, which helps with continuity of care. This data may also be used to generate reports to demonstrate the effectiveness of the WIC program.
- **Identify risks.** During the Nutrition Assessment, you have the opportunity to identify health conditions and discuss feeding behaviors with the participant. Through this conversation, you are able to identify the participant's medical and dietary risks. Identifying medical and dietary risk codes involves the use of probing questions and critical thinking skills.
- **Guide nutrition education.** By identifying participants' risks and concerns, you are able to provide targeted nutrition education specific to their interests and concerns. You can then refer them appropriately (as needed) and make a plan for their return visit.

The Nutrition Assessment guides your discussion and helps to personalize the WIC experience for participants. A good Nutrition Assessment will allow you to work with participants to assist them in achieving their ideal nutrition and health status. It is the basis of the strong positive outcomes WIC participants have! Please visit [WIC Nutrition Assessment \(https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/na.html\)](https://www.health.state.mn.us/people/wic/localagency/training/na.html) to learn about available resources.

Watch for the next memo in our Nutrition Assessment series next month!

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