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POLICY

1. The Qualified Nutritionist or Competent Professional Authority must be trained and competent in conducting a breastfeeding assessment and supporting breastfeeding through the prenatal and postpartum periods.
2. The Qualified Nutritionist or Competent Professional Authority must conduct a breastfeeding assessment at the certification of a breastfeeding dyad, when a breastfeeding dyad encounters a situation that may impact milk supply, and when a breastfeeding participant requests WIC formula.
3. The Qualified Nutritionist or Competent Professional Authority must tailor WIC services based upon the breastfeeding assessment, professional judgement, and the participant's breastfeeding goals to support a successful breastfeeding experience.
4. The Qualified Nutritionist or Competent Professional Authority must tailor food packages to meet the needs of the dyad, while minimizing adverse impacts on the participant's breastfeeding goals.
5. The Qualified Nutritionist or Competent Professional Authority must be familiar with the medical contraindications to breastfeeding and provide appropriate counseling and referrals.

REGULATIONS

Food packages and breastfeeding assessments, [CFR 246.10 \(e\)](#)

Nutrition education including breastfeeding promotion and support, [CFR 246.11 \(d\)](#)

Encouraging breastfeeding to all participants unless contraindicated for health reasons, [CFR 246.11 \(e\)\(1\)](#)


DEFINITIONS

Case Conferencing – As part of the implementation of the Breastfeeding Attrition Prediction Tool (BAPT), these conferences are held among key WIC staff to discuss issues, barriers, concerns and progress of a participant's case. The goal of the conference is for WIC staff to communicate frequently and collaborate on a participant's case, to ensure consistent and coordinated care and support is provided to participants at highest risk for breastfeeding attrition.

PROCEDURE

LA/VMA Policy Required Yes No

1. The Breastfeeding Coordinator (BFC) must ensure that Qualified Nutritionist (QN) or Competent Professional Authority (CPA) staff are trained and competent in conducting breastfeeding assessments, providing appropriate breastfeeding services, and tailoring food packages to assist participants in meeting their needs and reaching their breastfeeding goals.
2. The QN or CPA must review identified contraindications to breastfeeding and provide counseling and referrals, as appropriate. Participants who disclose that they are HIV-


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positive must be advised not to breastfeed and referred to their health care provider. WIC staff must maintain participant confidentiality and ensure privacy during discussions regarding a participant's HIV status.

3. Staff must inform pregnant participants of the food packages available to breastfeeding participants and the length of the certification period.
4. The QN or CPA must respect a participant's informed decision as to the infant feeding method choice and provide appropriate support, education, and tailored services, as needed.
5. The QN or CPA must encourage exclusive, continued breastfeeding and educate participants on how supplemental feedings of formula interfere with breast milk production and breastfeeding success.
6. The QN or CPA must tailor the appointment schedule and frequency of contacts based on the assessment, professional judgement, and the participant's needs/breastfeeding goals.
7. The QN or CPA must refer situations that are outside their scope of practice to the BFC or Designated Breastfeeding Expert (DBE).

Conducting the Breastfeeding Assessment

1. During assessment and counseling, the QN or CPA must provide participant-centered counseling, education, and anticipatory guidance, using positive words of encouragement, supporting breastfeeding as the standard method of infant feeding, and with sensitivity to the participant's individual breastfeeding experience.
2. The QN or CPA must evaluate a participant's breastfeeding knowledge, support, and confidence to ensure barriers are identified and discussed prior to or during the breastfeeding assessment.
3. Trained staff may observe a feeding to assess breastfeeding questions, concerns or complications the dyad is experiencing. The DBE and other trained and credentialed breastfeeding staff may provide hands-on assistance with permission from the participant, and if allowed by sponsor agency protocol and any professional scope of practice.
4. Based on the breastfeeding assessment, the QN or CPA must tailor food packages to support exclusive breastfeeding. When a breastfeeding participant requests WIC formula, the QN or CPA must issue the minimum amount, based on the assessed need and provide support and education.
5. The QN or CPA must discuss the option of using a breast pump to provide expressed breast milk to the infant and to maintain milk supply when a participant requests WIC formula or when the breastfeeding dyad is separated.
6. The QN or CPA must not routinely issue any quantity of WIC formula to breastfed infants less than one month of age. After a complete breastfeeding assessment, there may be

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instances when a dyad needs minimal supplementation. A maximum of one can (or equivalent) of formula may be issued when one of the following conditions is present:

- a. Separation of mother and infant for medical reasons
- b. Mother with previous breast surgery/trauma
- c. Cleft palate/lip or other congenital abnormalities
- d. Multiple birth
- e. Delayed lactation
- f. Medications affecting breast milk supply
- g. Insufficient glandular tissue
- h. Hormonal/endocrine abnormalities (PCOS, DM, Thyroid issues)
- i. QN/CPA professional judgement

If one can (or equivalent) of formula is issued within the first month of life, staff must clearly document the rationale in the infant's record.

7. At any time, a participant may change breastfeeding status. Any request for formula or additional formula must be assessed by a QN or CPA. If a breastfeeding infant is receiving formula, the amount of formula must be tailored to support breastfeeding goals. Any amount of formula issued must be the minimum amount needed, based on the new breastfeeding status.
8. The QN or CPA must continue to reassess the breastfeeding experience at all subsequent individual and household appointments and provide on-going support, guidance, participant-centered counseling and referrals, as needed.

GUIDANCE

The WIC breastfeeding assessment is the review and evaluation of a breastfeeding dyad's experience and collected/objective data which is used as a basis for providing participant-centered counseling with the breastfeeding participant. Assessment of breastfeeding practices must be documented in the participant's record; however, the use of the breastfeeding assessment tool should be used as a guide for new staff as they acquire the skills necessary to gather data in a participant-centered manner within the management information system.


RESOURCES

WIC Program Manual Sections and Policy Supplements:

- #1221: Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program
- #1225: Breast Pump Program
- #1135: Nutrition Assessment Process
- #1460: Local Agency Staff
- #1250: WIC Food Packages and Tailoring

WIC Library:

- U.S. Department of Agriculture VENA Guidance
- NYS Breastfeeding Assessment Tool and Guidance
- USDA Peer Counselor Training Curriculum
- CPA and BFC Competencies

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Other:

- [U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance, July 2016](#)
- [U.S. Department of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition Service Nutrition Services Standards, August 2013](#)
- [NYSDOH Policy Statement: Situations Where Breastfeeding is Contraindicated](#)
- American Academy of Pediatrics Policy Statement: [Breastfeeding and the Use of Human Milk](#)