

VIII. Certification, Eligibility, and Coordination of Services

8.1.100 Exit Counseling (Next Steps for Health)

Authority MPSF-1: WC-94-43-P

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POLICY: Next Steps for Health counseling shall be offered to all women (prenatal, post-partum, and breastfeeding) by the end of their certification to reinforce the importance of nutrition and health messages received through WIC. The program benefits of nutrition education will empower participants to make healthier food choices beyond their current certification.

PROCEDURES:

- A. Next Steps for Health counseling must be provided by the Competent Professional Authority (CPA) or nutritionist and will include, at a minimum, an explanation on all of the following:
 1. The nutritional risk condition.
 2. The importance of folic acid intake for preventing birth defects.
 3. The importance of breastfeeding as the preferred method of infant feeding and the continuation of breastfeeding for the infant's health during at least the first year of life.
 4. The importance of keeping immunizations current (for themselves and for their children).
 5. The health risks of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug use.
 6. The importance of a well-balanced diet.
- B. Offer the Next Steps for Health brochure to reinforce the WIC message. The CPA or nutritionist may offer an abbreviated counseling session for post-partum or breastfeeding women that were previously provided this information as a prenatal participant.
- C. Next Steps for Health counseling shall be offered at a visit other than the day eligibility is determined. If a pregnant participant only has a certification appointment prior to the delivery of her child, Next Steps for Health counseling is not required to be completed during her prenatal certification.
- D. Next Steps for Health counseling should not replace nutrition education when more risk-specific appropriate counseling is needed and should be provided in addition to the nutrition risk-specific counseling.
- E. Document the Next Steps for Health counseling contact in MOWINS.