Issuing Breastfeeding Equipment

Policy

WIC Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance Document: Breastfeeding aids and accessories are not necessary for all mothers but are designed to facilitate the initiation or continuation of breastfeeding for some mothers in special circumstances. The judicious issuance of such aids and accessories, with careful consideration of both cost and necessity, supports WIC's mission to increase the initiation and duration of breastfeeding among WIC participants and ultimately improve health outcomes. The provision of such aids and accessories is one component of the available strategies, initiatives, and services that support breastfeeding among WIC participants.[1]

Breastfeeding aids include devices and products such as breast pumps, supplemental nursing systems, and nipple shields. Other costs associated with the availability of these items through WIC, such as insurance and service fees for providing breast pumps, tubing, and kits necessary for electric pumps, are also allowable NSA costs.[1] Breastfeeding accessories are devices or products that, while not directly aiding the removal of milk from the breast, may facilitate breastfeeding. Only those products determined to be reasonable and necessary costs to support successful breastfeeding are allowed. Accessories may include products such as human milk storage bags, breast pump adaptors, certain nursing bras, and nursing shawls or covers.[4] Breastfeeding aids/accessories which do not directly support the initiation and continuation of breastfeeding are not within the scope of the WIC program and cannot be purchased with NSA funds. While such items cannot be purchased with NSA funds, they could be provided in kind to WIC. Examples include topical creams, ointments, foot stools, baby bottles, and nursing pillows.[4]

A breastfeeding assessment should occur to determine participant need as well as the benefit to the breastfeeding dyad for a particular aid. Additionally, breastfeeding aids should be provided in conjunction with appropriate counseling, education, and follow-up provided by trained staff under the guidance of WIC-Designated Breastfeeding Experts/lactation consultants as necessary.[1]

Breast pumps and other breastfeeding aids and accessories may not be offered to breastfeeding women solely as an inducement to consider or to continue breastfeeding. In general, breast pumps may be provided to WIC participants in the following situations:

- to mothers who are having difficulty in establishing or maintaining an adequate milk supply due to maternal/infant illness;
- during mother/infant separation (such as infant hospitalization or mother's return to work or school); and
- to others who have temporary breastfeeding problems.[3]

The provision of breast pumps should not circumvent or take the place of appropriate

breastfeeding education and support.[2]

Breastfeeding aids and accessories may not be issued to pregnant women (unless they are breastfeeding a WIC participant infant).[2] Anticipatory guidance may be given to pregnant women advising them that WIC may be able to provide them with these items if necessary once the baby is delivered.[1]

Many WIC participants are obtaining breast pumps through health insurers, group health plans, or Medicaid. State and local agencies should first consider these options before providing breast pumps through WIC.[2]

Agencies may not terminate or suspend participants or withhold food instruments or other WIC benefits for unreimbursed loss or damage to loaned pumps since breast pumps are not a program benefit.[5]

Authority

Excerpts from:

1. WIC Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance. Food Nutrition Services. July ed.; 2016:26-26.
2. WIC Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance. Food Nutrition Services. July ed.; 2016:28-28.
3. WIC Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance. Food Nutrition Services. July ed.; 2016:28-29.
4. WIC Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance. Food Nutrition Services. July ed.; 2016:27-27.
5. WIC Breastfeeding Policy and Guidance. Food Nutrition Services. July ed.; 2016:42-42.

Procedures

Breast pumps, collection kits, rental fees, and shipping and handling costs for these items are reimbursed using food funds. Breast shells and supplemental nursing systems are listed in the agency budget under Category E—Supplies. Although not addressed in this policy, nursing bras and pads are also acceptable breastfeeding promotion expenditures in this category.

Breast pumps will be authorized and issued by competent professional authorities (CPAs) or IBCLCs.

- A breastfeeding assessment should occur to determine participant need as well as the benefit to the breastfeeding dyad for a particular aid.
- Evaluate other sources of payment available for the pump such as private insurance and other sources of medical assistance (such as Medicaid and MCOs).
- Breast pumps and accessories needed to establish and maintain lactation, as well as

extend breastfeeding duration, can be issued to the participant category of breastfeeding women up to one year postpartum.
    - If a participant has received a breast pump from a Medicaid MCO and is in need of additional pump accessories not covered by their plan (e.g. replacement tubing, different size flanges, etc.) these can be issued by the local WIC agency.
- Breastfeeding aids should be provided in conjunction with appropriate counseling, education, and follow-up.
- There will be no charge to the participant.

Mothers that are breastfeeding their infants and have a need for supplemental formula from WIC may continue to receive a breast pump. Formula can be issued on an as-needed basis and only in the amount that is determined necessary after consultation with a competent professional authority (CPA) or the healthcare provider. The amount of formula provided may be up to half of a full formula food package, or "breastfeeding part in range". The goal should be to work with the mother to support her to meet her breastfeeding goals and ideally return to not needing formula. Receiving both a breast pump and formula from WIC together should not be the norm, and participants should be educated on the effects on milk supply as more formula is introduced.

Follow these steps when renting an electric hospital-grade breast pump for a participant:

- Have the participant sign a release of information that the WIC agency can share their information with the rental station.
- Call the rental station to provide the name of the person who will be using the pump, and ask that the bill be sent directly to your agency.
- Discuss the participant's plans for pumping breast milk.
- Use a demonstration pump and demonstrate how to assemble the pump.
- Review the instructions for cleaning the pump.
- Provide information on safe practices for storing and handling expressed breast milk.
- Write an alert in the WIC data system for the month the pump should be returned.
- Generate a nutrition care plan to record additional information (e.g., follow-up plans, evaluation of her understanding).
- Inform the participant if she needs to extend the rental agreement, she must notify the WIC agency before the agreement ends. (You cannot deny a participant WIC benefits for failing to return a breast pump.)
- Follow up with the participant regarding concerns or questions within a week of issuing the pump. The contact may be by telephone or in person.

Follow these steps when issuing an agency-owned, hospital-grade loaner pump, a personal-use electric pump, or a manual pump to a participant:

- Discuss the participant's plans for pumping breast milk.
- Use a demonstration pump and demonstrate how to assemble the pump.
- Review the instructions for cleaning the pump.
- Provide information on safe practices for storing and handling expressed breast milk.
- Document the issuance of the pump in the WIC data system in the Breastfeeding Equipment panel.
- If loaning a breast pump, write an alert in the WIC data system for the month the pump should be returned.
- Generate a nutrition care plan to record additional information (e.g., follow-up plans, evaluation of her understanding).
- If loaning, inform the participant if she needs to extend the loan agreement, she must notify the WIC agency before the agreement ends. (You cannot deny a participant WIC benefits for failing to return a breast pump.)
- Follow up with the participant regarding concerns or questions within a week of issuing the pump. The contact may be by telephone or in person.

Follow these steps when issuing breast shells to a participant:

- Use a demonstration kit and educate about how to assemble the shells.
- Review the instructions for assembly and cleaning included with each set of shells.
- Discuss how long to wear (refer to breast shell instructions, lactation consultant, or other qualified lactation resource).
- If shells are used for sore nipples, provide additional education on prevention and treatment of that condition.
- Document the issuance in the WIC data system in the Breastfeeding Equipment panel.
- Generate a nutrition care plan to record additional information (including the item provided and reason for issuance).
- Follow up with pregnant participants regarding concerns or questions within a week of issuing breast shells. If issued for nipple soreness during the postpartum period, follow-up sooner and until resolved. The contact may be by telephone or in person.

A breastfeeding dyad using a supplemental nursing system requires careful follow up and evaluation by someone experienced in working with high-risk breastfed babies.Therefore, WIC agencies should only issue supplemental nursing systems at the recommendation of the baby's health care provider and/or lactation consultant. Follow these steps when issuing a supplemental nursing system to a participant:

- Discuss the participant's plans for using the system and what supplement will be fed (expressed breast milk or formula).
- Provide information on safe practices for storing and handling expressed breastmilk or mixing formula as needed.
- Use a demonstration kit and discuss how tubing size and placement of the supplement container affect the flow.

- Review the importance of good positioning and latch on.
- Review cleaning instructions.
- Document the issuance in the WIC data system in the Breastfeeding Equipment panel.
- Generate a nutrition care plan to record additional information (including the follow up plan, reason for providing the equipment, summary of counseling provided, and an evaluation of her understanding about using and cleaning the item).
- Discuss follow-up plans with the baby's health care provider or the lactation consultant.
- Follow up with the participant regarding concerns or questions within a few days of issuing the equipment. The contact may be by telephone or in person.

The Breastfeeding Equipment Panel in the WIC data system will be used to record information about issued breastfeeding equipment, as applicable. Serialized inventory includes items that will be loaned and returned, such as loaner breast pumps. Non-serialized inventory includes items that are given to a WIC participant and not expected to be returned.

Serialized Inventory:

- Date issued
- Category of pump
- Type of pump
- Serial number
- Reason for issuance
- Date due
- Contact information for the participant
- Return date

Non-Serialized Inventory:

- Breast pumps (personal electric or manual pumps)
- Breastfeeding accessories (breast pump kits, breast shells, nursing pads, lanolin, pump tubing, pump flanges, pump valves, nipple shields, pump car adaptors, pump battery packs, milk storage bags, pump cleaning steam bags, pump cleaning wipes, nursing covers, and pumping bras)

Use the Breastfeeding Equipment Due Report or keep an agency file to help track electric breast pumps.

Some mothers may require extensions of pump loan or rental agreements for the duration of breastfeeding up to one year depending on needs.

Best Practices

Local WIC agencies have two options for providing hospital-grade electric breast pumps:

- Purchasing pumps and loaning them to participants.
- Negotiating reduced rental fees with local rental stations, and paying the rental fee for participants.

There are many factors to consider when deciding whether to purchase or rent electric breast pumps. Some key factors include the following:

- Usage patterns
- Access to rental stations
- Availability of refurbished pumps
- Available staff time for participant education

Local agencies that directly purchase electric pumps for loan to participants incur the financial liability of lost or damaged breast pumps. However, this option is often more cost effective for some agencies.

Local WIC agencies providing this equipment may be liable for injury to WIC participants resulting from improper use. This applies whether equipment is given, sold, or loaned. Therefore, local agencies should take reasonable steps to:

- Insure against loss or damage by participant use,
- Obtain a written agreement between the participant and the local WIC agency in order to collect contact information to facilitate follow-up, explain the terms of receiving a breast pump from WIC, and obtain the participant's signature agreeing with those terms,
- Document education provided and participant's understanding of the information, and
- Manage the physical inventory.

Local agencies may negotiate rental fees with third parties (local rental stations, pump manufacturers, hospital pharmacies, and lactation consultants) to provide pumps to WIC participants. It is strongly recommended that the contract or agreement specify each agency's responsibilities for education and follow up. This arrangement may be formalized through a contract or agreement. This option transfers liability for equipment loss or damage from the local agency to the third party. This option may be cost effective for agencies with low usage patterns, reasonable local rental fees, and good access to rental stations.

Note: Local agencies may not contract or negotiate rental agreements with third parties that have affiliations with WIC personnel.

There are a variety of pumps and the costs vary significantly between pumps. A pump that works well for one mother may not work for another. Therefore, it is important to offer more

than one type of pump. Factors to consider when deciding which pump to issue to a woman are as follows:

- Availability of an electrical outlet
- Time allowed for pumping breaks
- How often the pump will be used (e.g., occasionally vs. several times a day)
- The woman's experience and success using a breast pump
- How long the mother plans to breastfeed
- Cost comparison between the available pumps

The following reasons are potential and acceptable reasons for providing an electric pump to a breastfeeding mother:

- Mother is returning to work or school,
- Mother or infant is hospitalized,
- Premature infant is unable to nurse effectively,
- Infant has severe feeding problem (e.g., cleft lip or palate),
- Infant is sick and unable to nurse,
- Mother is sick for an extended period of time,
- Mother is on medication that is contraindicated for breastfeeding,
- Mother and infant are separated for more than 24 hours,
- Mother has multiples,
- Mother is physically unable to use a manual breast pump, or
- Other reasons as approved by the local agency Breastfeeding Coordinator or WIC Coordinator.

The following reports can be generated from the WIC data system and are helpful for tracking breastfeeding equipment:

- Breastfeeding Equipment Due Report (pumps issued in order by due date and including date issued, mother's name, family ID number, telephone number, equipment type, serial number and reason issued)
- Breastfeeding Equipment Issued Report (number of pumps issued by pump type)
- Breastfeeding Prevalence by Equipment Issuance Report (rate of breastfeeding prevalence for infants whose mothers were issued breastfeeding equipment by the type of serialized or non-serialized equipment)

Communicate with the primary health care provider to coordinate services, particularly for high-risk mother/baby dyads. Use the standard WIC forms (Referral from the Iowa WIC Program and Request for Information form) for this communication.

Local agencies should consider authorizing breast pumps of significant value in combination with some means to insure against loss or damage and injury, such as:

- establishing procedures to ensure that participants fully understand their rights and responsibilities when signing liability release forms;
- developing an agreement between the program and the participant which stipulates the participant's responsibility to return a loaned breast pump, to report if a breast pump lost, damaged, or stolen, and to waive liability of injury through use of a breast pump; and
- monitoring through periodic visual inspection, frequent inventory counts and records, and telephone check-ins.[5]

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