

WIC Local Agency Guidance – Reopening

WIC Certification Appointments

- WIC services require in-person visits to obtain consultation by WIC dietitians and nurses, review food packages and provide additional information such as breastfeeding consultation. After September 30, 2020 law will go back into effect requiring individuals seeking certification or recertification to be required to be physically present for eligibility determinations. The law allows for local agencies to waive the physical presence requirement for infants and children under certain circumstances. Those waivers cover the majority of WIC infants and children as long as they were present at their initial certification or are under 8 weeks of age. Additionally, those with disabilities, including pregnant women who are unable to be present due to complications as defined in 7 C.F.R. 246.7(o)(2), may be exempted from the physical presence requirement under the ADA.
 - Qualifying circumstances to waive physical presence for infants and children, without a disability include:
 - Infants under 8 weeks of age for whom all necessary certification information is provided;
 - Infant who was present at the initial certification visit and is receiving ongoing health care;
 - Infant who was present at the initial certification appointment, and the most recent certification visit, and has one or more parents who work;
 - Child who was present at the initial certification visit and is receiving ongoing health care; and
 - Child who was present at the initial certification appointment, and the most recent certification visit, and has one or more parents who work.
 - The State or local agency must grant an exception to applicants who are qualified individuals with disabilities and are unable to be physically present at the WIC clinic because of their disabilities or applicants whose parents or caretakers are individuals with disabilities that meet this standard (7 C.F.R. 246.7 (o)(2) Exceptions-(i)Disabilities). Examples of such situations include:
 - A medical condition that necessitates the use of medical equipment that is not easily transportable;
 - A medical condition that requires confinement to bed rest; and
 - A serious illness that may be exacerbated by coming in to the WIC clinic.
- See the document titled “Completing Certifications when Physical Presence is Waived” for more information on completing certifications when a participant is not present.

WIC Health Update Appointments

- See the document titled “Completing Health Update Appointments” for more information on completing a Health update appointment when the participant is not present.

WIC Nutrition Education Appointments

- Appointments can be completed in the following manner:
 - Over the phone

- By wichealth.org
- See the document titled “Completing Nutrition Education Appointments” for more information on completing nutrition education appointments when the participant is not present.

Face-to-Face Appointments

The information below are items to consider when providing services face-to-face. This is not an inclusive list. **Your local agency’s policies and procedures must be followed when determining your processes.**

- **Prior to a family coming into the WIC clinic for an appointment, consider the following steps:**
 - When making appointments or providing reminder phone calls, ask the participant and any others who are attending the WIC appointment to take their temperature prior to arriving at their appointment. If they have a fever, they should not come into the clinic and should reschedule their appointment.
 - Encourage participants to wear a mask/cloth face covering for the appointment.
 - Limit the number of family members/friends/etc. coming in for the appointment to only those who are necessary, if possible.
 - Consider collecting proofs, such as by email or text, prior to the appointment to limit the amount of contact between staff and participants.
 - To limit the number of WIC participants inside the WIC clinic location, have families call when they arrive at the WIC site location before coming in and let them know you will notify them when it is their turn to come into the clinic.
 - Should a client not have a car to wait in, allow them the option to come into the clinic right away.
 - Before the family comes into the site location, ask the following screening questions:
 - In the last 14 days, have you or any member of your household either been potentially exposed or been diagnosed with COVID-19?
 - Do you have a temperature of 100.4°F or higher?
 - Do you have any of the following symptoms?
 - Cough
 - Sore throat
 - Runny nose (not related to allergies)
 - If the participant answers “no” to all screening questions, the participant may attend the appointment.
 - If a participant answers “yes” to any of these screening questions, issue available benefits, and reschedule the participant’s appointment.
 - When it is time for their appointment, inform the family when they can come into the clinic.
- Agencies are highly encouraged to practice the one provider model to minimize the amount of time participants are in the clinic.
- If bloodwork or anthropometric measurements were deferred due to the physical presence waiver, those should be completed at the next in person appointment.

Other Clinic Considerations

- Scheduling
 - Schedule appointments to allow for any extra time it may take to check participants in, clean, etc.
 - Consider alternating face-to-face appointments with remote appointments.
- Travel
 - Consider how staff, who travel together between clinic sites, will get to and from clinics and still maintain social distancing.
- PPE/Cleaning Supplies
 - The use of masks/cloth face coverings for WIC staff and participants is an allowable cost. **Masks, face shields, gloves, and cleaning supplies are allowable costs.**
- Clinic Set Up
 - Consider where to have masks, hand sanitizer, etc. placed throughout the clinic so they are easily accessible during appointments. For example, place hand sanitizer and masks by the front door and at different work stations for participant/staff use.
 - Consider how to set up clinics to ensure social distancing (example: adding a table next to a desk to create additional space between staff and participants; using barriers to discourage children from approaching staff (e.g. pet gates); etc.).
 - Consider the use of plexiglass sneeze guards in administrative areas.
 - Consider having staff completing appointments over the phone in a separate location from where participants are being seen.
 - Put up signs about social distancing, mask use, screening questions (listed above), etc.
 - Put away or cover up books, toys, etc. Any items left in waiting areas or clinic rooms such as books and toys will need to be cleaned between each client if used.
- Rights and Responsibilities
 - **If a participant is completing a face-to-face appointment, they should sign for the Rights and Responsibilities**
- PIN Pads
 - Encourage discontinuation of PIN Pads and encourage participants to set up the PIN for their eWIC card remotely.
- Issuing Benefits
 - **If a participant is a “No Show” for their appointment, do not automatically issue 3 months of benefits.**
 - **If a participant is completing a face-to-face appointment, they should sign for benefits.**
- Cleaning
 - Follow CDC cleaning guidelines.
 - Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/cleaning-disinfecting-decision-tool.html>
 - Cleaning and Disinfecting: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/clean-disinfect/index.html>
 - Cleaning and Disinfecting your Facility: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>

- Cleaning and Disinfection for Community Facilities: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/organizations/cleaning-disinfection.html>
- Interim Infection Prevention and Control Recommendations for Patients with Suspected or Confirmed Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) in Healthcare Settings: https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/infection-control-recommendations.html?CDC_AA_refVal=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.cdc.gov%2Fcoronavirus%2F2019-ncov%2Finfection-control%2Fcontrol-recommendations.html
 - Identify a plan for sanitizing work stations between appointments, including what will be cleaned (equipment, tables, chairs, etc.) and the methods for cleaning these items.
- Breast Pumps
 - Continue to follow the guidance document titled “Guidance for Breast Pump Issuance During COVID-19”.

Resources

- Iowa Department of Public Health: <https://idph.iowa.gov/Emerging-Health-Issues/Novel-Coronavirus>
- COVID-19 in Iowa: <https://coronavirus.iowa.gov>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>