



Memorandum

#24-002

TO: WIC Regional Directors
WIC Local Agency Directors

FROM: Amanda Hovis, Director
Nutrition Education/Clinic Services Unit
Nutrition Services Section

DATE: January 8, 2024

SUBJECT: Guidance on Nutrition Notes and Family Nutrition Topic

On February 8, 2024, Nutrition Notes and Family Nutrition Topic will be released in myWIC and TXIN, respectively. The purpose of this memo is to provide general guidance for the use of this new feature.

Nutrition Notes Overview

Nutrition Notes are an action-oriented nutrition topic and a personalized note from the WIC Certifying Authority (CA) or WIC Certifying Specialist (WCS) summarizing key elements discussed during nutrition counseling.

Nutrition Notes allow staff to individualize nutrition messaging, provide encouragement and tailor resources to the client's interests and needs. Clients benefit from a more personalized experience, increasing the value of WIC services. A clear, written summary of key counseling highlights will help support follow-through of action items and can provide a more applicable starting point for future conversations.

Entering a Nutrition Note is required as part of the certification process in TXIN. Completing the Nutrition Note meets the requirements for VENA counseling documentation outlined in policy NE:1.0 and requires three steps: selecting a *Standard Nutrition Topic*, writing a *Note to Client*, and sharing the Note to myWIC. In rare instances where no note is written, staff must document a summary of the VENA session in the internal section or timeline note. The Nutrition Notes section can also be utilized as part of high risk or other nutrition and breastfeeding counseling sessions.

Where to find Nutrition Notes

In TXIN, staff will complete Nutrition Notes in the updated VENA (Family Nutrition Topics) Section. The *Standard Nutrition Topic* and *Note to Client* replaces the current *Goal* sections of VENA documentation.

In myWIC, clients can view Nutrition Notes from the Nutrition Education menu.

How to write Nutrition Notes

Start by selecting a Standard Nutrition Topic that most closely matches any action steps or goals identified during the counseling session. Staff may select from the options in **Appendix A**.

Next, write a personalized note that captures key elements of your counseling conversation, including any action steps. Staff will eventually find their own style in writing notes, but may opt to use the following approach:

1. Introductory sentence.
 - a. For example: I enjoyed talking with you; It was great to meet you and baby *[name]*; Thanks for coming in today; I loved hearing about *[topic]*; etc.
2. 1-2 sentence summary of what you talked about.
 - a. Include affirming or empathetic language, as appropriate.
 - b. Identify strengths, where appropriate.
3. Summary of any action steps.
 - a. In some instances, bullet points may be helpful to draw out key steps but be sure to maintain a conversational tone. Never use bullet points alone.
4. Reference to what resources you are linking.

A few important guidelines to follow when writing your notes:

1. Write in plain language. For information and training, visit: [plainlanguage.gov](https://www.plainlanguage.gov)
2. Always use sentence case (only first word and proper nouns are capitalized, with the rest of the words lowercase). Do not use all CAPS or all lowercase.
3. Avoid using acronyms, slang, text abbreviations, or WIC jargon.

4. Use the client's first names where possible. Avoid overly familiar terms of endearment (i.e. momma, sweetie, etc).
5. Use a friendly, encouraging tone.
6. Include expressions of empathy, when appropriate.
7. Frame action steps in a welcoming, attainable tone. Avoid language that implies pressure or rigid expectation.

Examples of Nutrition Notes are available in **Appendix B**.

How to write Nutrition Notes in other languages

At this time, TXIN cannot translate text. Therefore, staff should utilize Google Translate to translate their note before entering it in the *Note to Client* section.

For staff using Google translate, it is helpful to save the English version of the note into the Family Nutrition Topic Timeline Notes for continuity of care. Staff who can write fluently in the client's preferred language are not expected to include an English translation and may type the note directly into the Note to Client.

How to write Nutrition Notes when there is no clear topic

There are times that collaboratively identifying an action step may not be possible or appropriate.

In these instances:

1. Staff should consider other ways to provide value or build rapport within a note. Examples include providing anticipatory guidance, general words of encouragement, affirmations and highlighting strengths, or helpful resources for shopping with WIC. Samples of these types of notes are also included in **Appendix B**.
2. In the rare instance that a note is not appropriate, staff may:
 - a. Select Nutrition Topic: "A Personalized Message (other)." This topic will default to not show in myWIC.
 - b. Document "No note available" in the Note to Client.
 - c. Ensure *Show Note in myWIC* is toggled to NO. Save.
 - d. Document a summary of the appointment in the Internal Only section or the Family Nutrition Topic Timeline Notes.

How to document High Risk Counseling

Staff should use the updated VENA (Family Nutrition Topic) section in TXIN for high-risk documentation, consistent with policy [CS:33.0](#). High-risk counselors should:

1. Select Standard Nutrition Topic: High Risk Counseling. This topic will default to not show in myWIC.
2. Complete a Note to Client, if relevant. This can be a meaningful place to communicate action steps discussed and provide referrals.
 - a. If a Note to Client is not appropriate, document "No note available" in the Note to Client, and ensure *Show Note in myWIC* is toggled to NO.
3. Document a summary of the internal high-risk counseling session in the Timeline Notes section.

How to document Nutrition Notes in TXIN

The screenshot shows the TXIN interface for VENA (Family Nutrition Topics). A callout box with a blue border and a blue arrow pointing to the '+ New Family Nutrition ...' button contains the following text:

1. Open the VENA (Family Nutrition Notes Topic) and Add New Family Nutrition Topic.
This can be done from either the family page or participant page.

The interface below the callout shows the 'VENA (Family Nutrition Topics)' header, a 'Family Nutrition Topics Associated Family View' dropdown, and a '+ New Family Nutrition ...' button. Below these are several filter buttons: 'Start ...', 'Goals/Commitments', 'Participant', 'Staff', and 'Completion ...'.

New Family Nutrition Topic - Unsaved

General

Admin

General

Family

*

NN_Krebs

Participant

Client-facing

Standard Nutrition Topic

*

Show topic in myWIC?

No

Note to Client

*

Enter text...

Show Note in my WIC?

No

2. Select Participant, if desired.

If no participant is select, myWIC will display [Last Name] Household.

3. Select Standard Nutrition Topic.

Use "A Personalized Message (other)" if other topics do not apply.

4. Add tailored message in Note to Client.

Save.

5. Toggle Show topic in myWIC & Show Note in myWIC to yes. Save.

When staff toggle to yes and hit SAVE, the topic and note will populate to myWIC. Staff may choose to wait until completing all parts of the VENA (Family Nutrition Topic) before toggling to yes and saving. Staff may select not to share either topic or note in unique instances when sharing in myWIC is not appropriate or relevant. Standard practice should be to share.

This institution is an equal opportunity provider.

Internal Only

Parent/Guardian
Primary Concern ---

Staff Primary Concern ---

Goal Progress ---

Success Level ---

Completion Date ---

6. Complete sections of the Internal Only section, if relevant. *(This section is not required)*
Concern sections should be used for taking more detailed assessment notes for internal use and continuity of care. Staff may include important information for follow-up or documenting relevant concerns not addressed in the Note to Client.

Document any relevant progress from previous goals or identified action items.



Referrals To

7. Add relevant referrals. *Referrals do not show in the Nutrition Note section of myWIC.*

+ New Referral To ⋮

Referral To Name ▾

Owner ▾

Created On ↓ ▾

Participant ▾

Follow-Up Requ...

8. Add New Family Education.

Recommended Family Education and Resources

Active Family Education ▾

+ New Family Education ⋮

Title ▾

Start Date ▾

End Date ▾

Created By ▾

Created On ↓ ▾

Quick Create: Family Education [X]

New Section

Family [Sp29.Flack]

Nutrition Education * --- ←

Start Date * 12/20/2023

End Date * 6/20/2024

9. Select Relevant Nutrition Education.
*Staff may create more than one nutrition education recommendations per family, if desired.
Recommended selections added from the VENA (Family Nutrition Topic) screen will also appear in the Education tab on the Family Page.*

10. Save and Close.

Save and Close [v] Cancel

11. Add a timeline note, if needed. *This section may be used for high-risk notes, saving English copy of Nutrition Notes written in other languages, or any other needs.*

Timeline [+ [] [] [] [] []]

Search timeline

Enter a note... []

Training and guidance documents can be found in the Egnyte TXIN Folder under Staff Resources. Direct link here
<https://txwic.egnyte.com/fl/EIsoiqCmOX>

For questions regarding this memo, please contact Andrea Urquidez at
andrea.urquidez@hhs.texas.gov.

Appendix A – Standard Nutrition Topics

Audience	Nutrition Topic:	May include:
All	A personalized message (other)	Any topic
All	Adding nutritious foods	Increase f/v, iron rich foods, calcium, water, etc.
All	Following up on a referral	HCP, Medicaid, SNAP, food bank, ECI, dentist, etc.
All	High Risk Counseling	Used exclusively for high-risk counseling
All	Learning more about a topic	Ideal for precontemplation- someone just ready to start reading more or taking a class
All	Trying something new	Recipes, new food or activity, try a new idea for a selective eater, etc.
All	Working on healthy habits	Start, modify or continue a healthy habit (i.e. physical activity, smoking cessation, increasing water, decrease caffeine, limit juice or sugar-sweetened beverages, healthy snacks)
All Women	Practicing self-care	Topics that support mental health, stress management, etc.
Pregnant	Eating well for pregnancy	General pregnancy nutrition, food safety, prenatal vitamin, etc.
Pregnant	Managing pregnancy discomforts	Tips for nausea, vomiting, etc.
Pregnant	Preparing for breastfeeding	Prenatal breastfeeding education, feeding plan, hospital tips, etc.
Breastfeeding	Eating well for breastfeeding	General breastfeeding recommendations, prenatal vitamin, etc.
Breastfeeding; Infant	Continuing breastfeeding	Any topics related to successful maintenance of breastfeeding, including pumping, etc.
Infant	Adjusting baby's feeding	Formula prep, trying a new formula, combo feeding, etc.
Infant	Starting or adding solid foods	Topics related to starting and feeding solids, choking hazards, allergenic foods, etc.
Infant; Child	Caring for my child's gums and teeth	All things dental
Infant; Child	Supporting my child's development	Ideas for playing with baby/child, milestones, toilet training, etc.

Audience	Nutrition Topic:	May include:
Infant; Child	Weaning from the breast or bottle	Weaning
One-year cert	Transitioning to toddler food	Transition to milk, general toddler foods/portions, choking hazards, etc.
Child	Creating mealtime memories	Mealtime routines
Child	Helping my child explore foods	Picky eating, kids in the kitchen, snack ideas, appropriate milk intake, etc.

Appendix B – Example Nutrition Notes

All examples are fictitious and for training purposes only. Any resemblance to real people or situations is unintentional and purely coincidental.

I. Nutrition Notes Covering Standard Topics

Nutrition Topic: Trying Something New

Note to Client: It was great talking with you today, Kat. I love that you are looking for more creative ways to add vegetables to your meals and I think you will enjoy the recipe ideas we talked about at the link below. We look forward to hearing about which ones you tried and like the most at your next appointment. I'm also including an online class that may give you more ideas.

Nutrition Education: [Recipes | Texas WIC](#) (webpage)

[Fruits and Vegetables: How Can I Help My Family Eat More?](#) (click and learn class)

Nutrition Topic: Working on Healthy Habits

Note to Client: Thank you for talking with me today and sharing your concern that Max and Julie aren't getting enough activity because it's been so hot. We came up with some great ideas together. I can't wait to hear if they like dancing to the Zobey videos we discussed, and which one is their favorite. Let us know at your next visit! The link to the videos and a class with Zobey is below.

Nutrition Education: [Zobey and Friends - YouTube](#) (videos)

[The Adventures of Zobey: Let's Dance!](#) (click and learn class)

Nutrition Topic: Adding Nutritious Foods

Note to Client: Hi Frances! It was great to see you, Rosie and Ryan today. You are doing such an amazing job taking care of yourself with the new pregnancy. We discussed that your iron was a little low today. When you talk to your doctor about it, remember you can find your results under your name in the app. I hope the class below will give you more ideas for adding iron rich foods to your meals. You mentioned using the beans you get from WIC as an easy way to start eating more iron this week.

Nutrition Education: [Preventing Anemia with Iron-Rich Foods](#) (click and learn class)

Nutrition Topic: Practicing Self-care

Note to Client: Congrats on baby Jordan—so glad to hear delivery went smoothly. There are so many changes going on with a new baby at home, so it's wise that you brought up taking care of yourself, too. You mentioned that you enjoy walking but that it's been too cold outside. Give our Mom Fitness workout videos a try. You can do them with Jordan next to you or while she's sleeping. I also found a click and learn class that'll give you more ways to make your care a priority as well as baby's.

Nutrition Education: [Mom Fitness - YouTube](#) (videos)

[Nutrition and Self-Care for the New Mom](#) (click and learn class)

Nutrition Topic: Eating Well for Pregnancy

Note to Client: Congratulations on your pregnancy, Kat. Today we talked about your questions about caffeine and fish during your pregnancy. I love your idea to switch your afternoon coffee to decaf to help limit caffeine intake. I'm including a link to a live online class that you may be interested in.

Nutrition Education: [Live Pregnancy Discussion: What to Eat When You Are Expecting](#) *(live online class)*

Nutrition Topic: Learning more about a topic

Note to Client: I enjoyed talking with you today about your pregnancy and different feeding options for your baby. Below are the resources we talked about to learn more about breastfeeding. Talk it over with your partner and doctor and know that we are here if you have any questions along the way. Our 24/7 Breastfeeding Hotline is: 855-550-6667.

Nutrition Education: [How Should I Feed My New Baby?](#) *(click and learn class)*

[For Dad | Getting Prepared | BreastmilkCounts.com](#) *(web article)*

Nutrition Topic: Continuing to Breastfeed

Note to Client: It was so nice to meet you and your sweet baby today. You are doing such an amazing job pumping your milk for Alex while he is still learning to latch. We are here to support you every step of the way! Today you met with the breastfeeding counselor to help with latching. You can always follow up with her at 512-555-5555 or with the Texas Lactation Support Hotline 24/7 at 855-550-6667. I added a link below for the class we talked about to learn more about bottle feeding your breastmilk.

Nutrition Education: [Bottle Feeding Your Baby](#) *(click and learn class)*

Nutrition Topic: Starting or Adding Solids

Note to Client: Hi Lauren! Thanks so much for your visit to WIC today. I loved hearing how James is doing and discussing his eating. It sounds like both of you are ready for him to start solid foods! Your WIC package will include jarred baby foods for him starting next month and I wanted to share some helpful links as you get started. I can't wait to hear how he is doing during our next visit. Please reach out if you need support!

Nutrition Education: [For Baby Articles](#) *(web page)*

[Live Discussion on Introducing Your Baby to Foods](#) *(live online class)*

Nutrition Topic: Weaning for breast or bottle

Notes to Client: Thanks for bringing Ariana in for her appointment today – it was so nice to see both of you again. I’m glad to hear she is starting to play independently. You mentioned that you have tried several different things to wean her from the bottle. It’s common for this to be a challenge and you are being very patient with her. I think your idea of reading a book and offering water in a cup before bed is great! We’ll be interested to hear how that is going at your next appointment. I’ve included a link to one of our classes that might provide additional tips on weaning – you’ve got this!

Nutrition Education: [Bye-Bye Bottle](#) (*click and learn class*)

II. Example Nutrition Notes Demonstrating Empathy or Covering Sensitive Topics

Nutrition Topic: Following up on a referral

Note to Client:

It was so great to see you today and hear about what an adventurous eater Lily is! I was so sorry to hear that you lost your job– I understand how stressful that is. I’m including a link to 211 Texas. You can click on Your Texas Benefits to apply for both Medicaid and SNAP. The website can also help you find local food banks, employment assistance and other resources if you need them. I’ve also added the link to the Healthy Texas Kids site that has fun videos for Lily.

Nutrition Education: [211 Texas](#) (*website*)

[Healthy Texas Kids - YouTube](#) (*videos*)

Nutrition Topic: Working on Healthy Habits (may chose not to show topic in myWIC)

Note to Client: Hi Melanie – I enjoyed meeting you today and learning more about Julia’s love of unicorns! Today, we noticed on Julia’s growth chart that she has gained weight more quickly than in previous visits. We thought through some possible things that could be impacting this and came up with some great ideas. You mentioned you plan to start diluting her juice with water again and packing some snack bags with fruit that is easy to grab on the weekend. I’ve also linked the class I told you about with more drink ideas. Remember you can now see her growth chart under her name in the app.

Nutrition Education: [Live Discussion and Activity on Cool Drinks for Kids](#) (*live online class*)

Nutrition Topic: Working on Healthy Habits

Note to Client: It was so nice to meet you today and hear how excited you are about your pregnancy! I can already tell what an amazing mom you are going to be. I appreciate you sharing with me about your struggle to quit smoking. You should be so proud of the efforts you are already making. You mentioned that you want to try making a list of other things you can do

when you feel like smoking and plan to call the quit line. I linked the resources we talked about and some information about nutrition during pregnancy below. You've got this!

Nutrition Education: [YesQuit](#) (website)

[Your Guide To Pregnancy](#) (brochure)

[New WIC Families](#) (webpage)

Nutrition Topic: Practicing Self-Care (may consider not showing Topic)

Note to Client: Thank you so much for taking time to talk with me today. Being a new mom comes with a lot of emotions and many moms have some of the same feelings you shared. I am glad that you plan to call your doctor's office to let the nurse know how you are feeling. Below are a few links for more information on Baby Blues and Postpartum Depression. If you feel like you need to talk to someone right away, please call the 24/7 National Maternal Mental Health Hotline 833-852-6262.

Nutrition Education: [Postpartum Support International - PSI](#)

[The Baby Blues and Postpartum Depression](#)

[Mental & Emotional Health | Get Help | BreastmilkCounts.com](#)

III. Examples Nutrition Notes when there is no clear nutrition topic or action step

Client who has no real nutrition concerns, consider focusing on anticipatory guidance

Nutrition Topic: A Personalized Message

Note to Client: I enjoyed visiting with you today, Aimee. I am so glad to hear that Lucas is such a great eater and willing to try anything! You are doing such a great job exposing him to a big variety of flavors. I wanted to share some information on what to expect as he is turning 2 – don't be surprised if he starts getting a little picky with foods and telling you "NO", that's totally normal! We look forward to seeing him grow!

Nutrition Education: [Watch Me Grow, Years 1 to 5](#) (web article)

Appointments when conversation is difficult due to distractions – consider focusing on age-appropriate resources, adding to things you learned in conversation or noticed in the health history, or using words of encouragement.

Nutrition Topic: Helping my child explore foods

Note to Client: I'm sorry our appointment got cut short today. It's okay that Dana and Maya were feeling a little restless. We left off with you expressing worry about the girls eating enough nutritious foods. Hang in there—2 and 4 years old can be a tricky time at meals. I'm sending you a quick article that covers the amount of food your child needs. We also have

a wonderful online class that dives into picky eating, including what is normal and when to get help. Reach out if you need us!

Nutrition Education: [What and How Much Should I Feed My Child?](#) (web article)

[Battle at the Table: Is it Just a Phase?](#) (click and learn class)

Nutrition Topic: A Personalized Message

Note to Client: Hi Monica, thank you so much for taking time to come to your WIC appointment, even though I know you had to rush to Jonathan's soccer game. You are juggling things so well. Although we didn't get to talk for long, I wanted to share a couple of links for resources that mothers of 1-year-olds find useful. Your food package will also be changing to more food options. Sarah will also start receiving whole milk- we recommend about 2 cups a day. Please let us know if you have any questions.

Nutrition Education: [Tips for Feeding 1-2 Year Olds](#) (click and learn class)
[Watch Me Grow, Years 1 to 5](#) (web article)

Nutrition Topic: A Personalized Message

Note to Client: Hi Ava, I know today was a hard day. You are doing such an incredible job trying to soothe Josiah when he is very fussy. I know it can feel so frustrating, but I watched your mom instincts kick in, and you did all the right things. Even though it was hard for us to talk today, I'm glad I was able to give you some additional information about spitting-up. If the ideas on the handout I gave you don't help, I recommend talking with his pediatrician. I'm adding a few additional resources for you and Josiah that may be helpful. You are doing a great job Ava!

Nutrition Education: [Baby Behavior | BreastmilkCounts.com](#)
[Mental & Emotional Health | Get Help | BreastmilkCounts.com](#)