

Individual Counseling – Homemade Baby Foods

Instruction Sheet

Individual counseling is recommended for participants who are not able to attend regularly scheduled Nutrition Education classes at the local WIC clinic. Individual counseling sessions should always be an option for any participant who prefers to have individualized attention and participants should never be discouraged from meeting their nutrition education contact requirements in this fashion. Individual Nutrition Education counseling is also recommended for WIC clinics that do not offer group Nutrition Education classes due to clinic size or clinic caseload such as clinics in rural communities or “clinics on wheels”.

The first step for conducting an individual counseling session of Homemade Baby Foods is to read the group lesson plan by the same title. Read the entire lesson plan and follow all activities outlined in it.

As noted in the Homemade Baby Foods group lesson plan the objective of this counseling session is to explore with our participants homemade baby foods as a convenient, economic, and nutritious option. Exploring the possibility of preparing homemade baby foods with our WIC participants should be done while using the Nevada WIC CARES skills:

- Connecting with Families: building rapport with your participants, being friendly and respectful of their opinions and behaviors
- Asking Open-Ended Questions: using open-ended questions that are not judgmental to involve the participant in the nutrition education process
- Responsive Communication: allowing participants to express themselves, giving them enough time to talk and not dominating the conversation, summarizing
- Empowering Participants: seizing appropriate opportunities to make affirming statements
- Support with Follow-Up: work with the participant to determine next steps, plan, or offer a Nutrition Education opportunity that interests the participant

Homemade Baby Foods should be presented to participants who have expressed some interest in the introduction of solids or infant food preparation topic. Individual nutrition education counseling can be used during a certification or a nutrition education appointment. Please, keep in mind that in nutrition education only appointments you may need to refer back to the nutrition education questionnaire completed by the participant in their previous appointment to find whether this is a topic that the participant has shown some interest in.

Attached you will find the Homemade Baby Foods Worksheet. Go over this worksheet with the participant in your counseling session. Use it as a tool to explore the topic and to identify their thoughts and beliefs on the subject. A way of introducing the worksheet would be: “you selected the “Making Baby Foods” topic on the circle chart. What questions do you have about it? (wait for response) Yes,

making your own baby food can seem a little bit overwhelming when we don't have any experience but we can brainstorm some different ideas about it if you'd like (wait for response). Before we begin exploring some ideas, I was wondering what you have heard about feeding solids to your baby. Here is a list some of some things you might have heard. Have you heard any of these? (wait for response and circle any applicable statements) have you heard any other things that are not listed?"

The second question should be use to explore what benefits attract the participant to making homemade baby food. It can also be used to show some benefits she may have not thought about. For instance, she might have thought that making her own baby food at home can save some money and it is healthier for the baby but she might have not realized that she can actually prepare the food in bulk and freeze it. If she mentions that she had never heard about this, talk about ideas on how to prepare the baby food in larger quantities and how to freeze and store the baby food.

The last question can be used to establish the Next Steps by exploring what baby foods her infant may find enjoyable. For example: "What kind of baby foods would you be interested in preparing? (wait for response and write answers on the lines provided) " if she doesn't have any ideas, offer some recipes like the ones found in the Homemade Baby Foods handout created for the group lesson plan.

It is worth mentioning that while the WIC food package offers jarred baby food to our participants this doesn't necessary eliminate the option or need to talk about homemade baby foods with our participants. While jarred baby foods are a practical option preparing homemade baby foods offers a wider variety of foods that infants can try; variety in an infant's and child's diet is important to build a lifetime of healthy eating habits.

Remember to follow-up on their next visit to see if any of the ideas explored have occurred or to talk about any barriers or difficulties that may be keeping the participant from preparing homemade baby food. Remember that we are striving to provide a continuum of care and to empower and support our participants to achieve their own wellness goals.