

COVID-19 Best Practices: Safely Serving Missouri WIC Participants in Clinics

This document contains best practice suggestions for local agencies (LA's) to implement in order to safely provide services to WIC participants in the clinic. Protecting staff and participants from contracting COVID-19 is a high priority. Please direct any questions about the guidance to technical assistance (TA) staff.

CDC encourages reopening with the following safe behavioral practices:

- social distancing (specifically, staying 6 feet away from others when you must go into a shared space)
- frequently washing hands or use alcohol-based (at least 60% alcohol) hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available
- wearing cloth face coverings
- avoiding touching eyes, nose, and mouth
- staying home when sick
- cleaning and disinfecting frequently touched objects and surfaces

Best Practice Suggestions from Missouri WIC:

- Request that only the parent and child(ren) who need to be present attend the WIC appointment.
- Limit the amount of time the family is in the office by gathering as much certification information as possible over the phone. Refer to WOM policies and FNS approved waivers.
- Post signs with a contact phone number in parking areas and entrances, asking that the participant phone from their car to check in when they arrive. Invite participant to wait in the car until called inside. Complete portions of the appointment by phone with participant in car such as: updating demographics; nutrition assessment; nutrition education or utilize wichealth.org; food prescription; and explaining eWIC redemption.
- Plan time between appointments for cleaning and disinfecting of all surfaces the participants may come in contact with, including anthropometric equipment and signature pads. Refer to [CDC guidance](#) for cleaning and disinfecting your facility.
 - Surfaces frequently touched by multiple people, such as door handles, desks, phones, light switches, and faucets, should

Allowable WIC Costs

The WIC State Agency will purchase washable cloth masks for participants and local agency staff. Covid-19 related items used in the clinic such as face masks, hand sanitizer, and sneeze guards are allowable WIC costs. Send requests for approval to your TA staff prior to purchase.

be cleaned and disinfected at least daily. More frequent cleaning and disinfection may be required based on level of use. For example, certain surfaces and objects in public spaces, such as card reader writers, should be cleaned and disinfected before each use.

- Disinfect card reader/writers by following the [General Guidelines for Disinfecting a CyberJack](#) provided by the manufacturer.
- Create distance between staff and participants in the clinic when possible.
 - Arrange reception or other communal seating area chairs by turning, draping (covering chair with tape or fabric so seats cannot be used), spacing, or removing chairs to maintain social distancing.
 - Place a small table between staff and participants.
 - Place signage on the floor or walls to indicate a distance of 6 feet apart.
 - Use sneeze guards between staff and participants. See example [here](#).
- Stagger staff with some working in the office and some working remotely if staffing levels prevent social distancing.
- Implement health screening procedures before staff and participants are allowed into the clinic.
- Recommend that staff and participants over the age of two years old wear masks in the clinic.
- Place hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol at strategic locations in the clinic for staff and participants to use.
- Consider what items can be removed completely, such as toys, brochures, and reading materials, to reduce frequent handling or contact from multiple people.
- Offer clinic signage in language that is easily understood and meets area population needs.
- Do weighing, measuring height or length, and hemoglobin in the safest way possible.
 - Use referral data for height, weight, and hemoglobin when available. Refer to policy 2.02800 and 8.1.070.
 - Use personal protective equipment (PPE), including gloves and face mask.
 - Request that participants over 2 years of age wear a mask (PPE or cloth face mask) for height, weight, and hemoglobin. See above notice regarding cloth face masks from the WIC state agency.
 - Staff and participant practice frequent handwashing.
 - Clean and disinfect surfaces before and after participant contact.
 - Use eye covering, goggles, face shields, and gowns only if recommended by the local agency.

Cloth Face Coverings

Cloth face coverings are not considered PPE. They may prevent persons, including those who don't know they have the virus, from spreading it to others but may not protect the wearers from exposure to the virus that causes COVID-19.

- Practice correct donning and doffing procedures when using PPE.
- Utilize video conferencing with applications like doxy.me and zoom.
- Offer breastfeeding assistance by phone or teleconferencing when possible.
- Offer breastfeeding assessment in the office when necessary with special attention given to screening, masking, and hygiene.
- Offer multi-user breast pumps as needed, using the protocols in the disaster plan to rent and return the multi-user pump. Talk with prenatal women about the possibility of getting a single user pump from their insurer.

COVID-19 Related Resources for WIC clinics

- COVID-19 Information for WIC Families: Frequently Asked Questions about temporary WIC program operation changes
<https://health.mo.gov/living/families/wic/families/covid-19.php>
- Show Me Strong Recovery Plan: General guidelines for reopening Missouri's economy <https://showmestrong.mo.gov/>
- CDC Reopening Guidance: Reopening Guidance for Cleaning and Disinfecting Public Spaces, Workplaces, Businesses, Schools and Homes
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/reopen-guidance.html>
- CDC Facility Disinfecting Guidance: Cleaning and Disinfecting Your Facility
<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/disinfecting-building-facility.html>
- CDC simple posters, some in other languages, free for download available at <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/communication/print-resources.html?Sort=Date%3A%3Adesc>
- OSHA: Guidance and resources for preventing exposures to coronavirus
<https://www.osha.gov/SLTC/covid-19/>
- NWA: National WIC Association COVID 19 Resources from FNS/USDA
<https://www.nwica.org/covid-19-resources>
- USBC: Breastfeeding Committee Resources including COVID-19 Interim Guidance for Infant and Young Child Feeding in Emergencies
<http://www.usbreastfeeding.org/p/cm/ld/fid=33>