

Module D:

Postpartum Nutrition

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Postpartum Nutrition Overview

Introduction

This module provides information for breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module WIC staff will be able to:

- Describe the general nutritional needs of postpartum women.
- Describe common postpartum problems and identify solutions to these problems.
- Identify indicators of nutritional need and specify conditions for a postpartum woman's WIC eligibility.
- Discuss family planning.
- In a case study situation, assess a postpartum woman's anthropometric, biochemical, clinical, and dietary status.
- In a role-play situation, interview and provide individual education to a postpartum woman.

After The Birth

Definition of Postpartum

Postpartum is the period of time after birth.

Postpartum women are women who have recently given birth.

Postpartum Period May Be Stressful

For the new mother, the postpartum period may be quite stressful. This may be due to:

- The physical stress of pregnancy and delivery.
- The large amount of work to do with little time for rest or sleep.
- The need of other family members for attention while the new baby becomes the focus of attention.
- Hormonal shifts may cause temporary “baby blues”.

Sometimes because of stress the new mother may forget about her own health and nutrition.

Needs of the New Mother

The postpartum period is a time of dramatic emotional and physical change for the new mother.

Whether breastfeeding or bottle feeding, the new mother should be encouraged to take care of herself. She will need to:

- Replace the nutrients lost during pregnancy and delivery
- Return to a healthy weight
- Eat a healthy diet
- See her doctor for the postpartum medical visit
- Consider family planning

Learning Activity

Learning Activity 1: *Birth & Postpartum Experience*, found at the end of this module will help you learn more about experiences a new mother may have.

Nutritional Needs of Postpartum Women

Importance of Postpartum Woman's Diet

The postpartum woman needs to eat a nutritious diet:

- To replace the nutrients she lost during pregnancy.
- For energy.
- To maintain her body.

Nutrition Recommendations

The chart on the next page lists general nutrition recommendations for postpartum women.

Recommended Diet

A postpartum woman's diet should replace nutrients lost during pregnancy and include nutrients needed to maintain her health. This can prevent fatigue and prepare her to be well-nourished in the event of a future pregnancy.

Recommended Food Group Servings

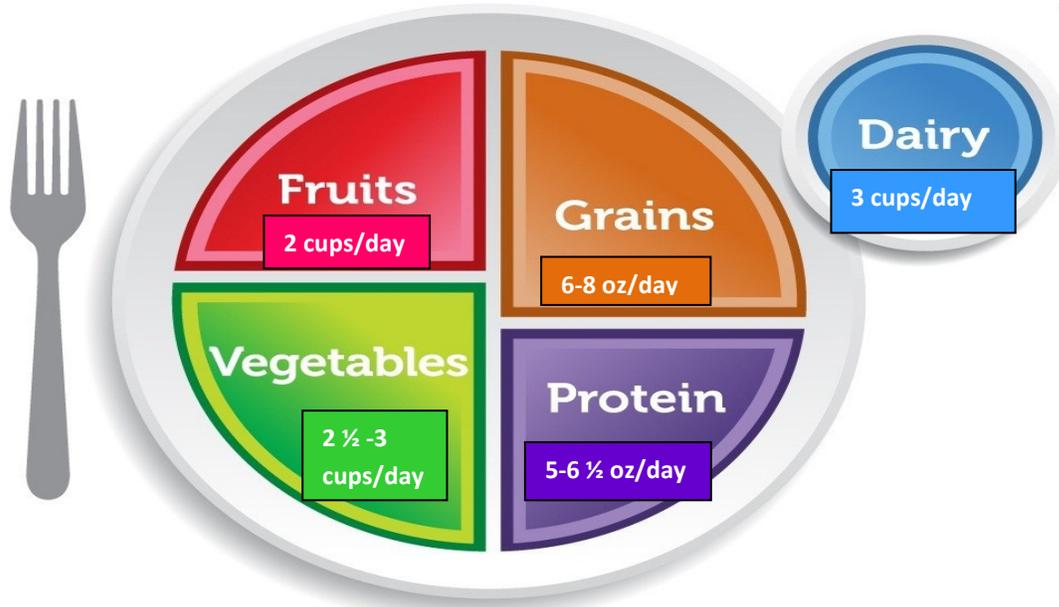
Use the MyPlate for Women on the following pages to guide you when talking with a postpartum participant.

Nutritional Needs of Postpartum Women *(continued)*

General Nutrition Recommendations for Postpartum Women

- Eat a wide variety of nutrient dense foods.
 - Vary your veggies
 - Focus on fruits
 - Half your grains whole
 - Go lean with protein
 - Get calcium-rich foods
- Eat the recommended servings for each food group using the MyPlate as a guide for family meal selection and preparation.
- Use foods and recipes requiring little or no preparation. (avoid high-fat fast foods)
- Take in plenty of fluids such as water and soups.
- Avoid:
 - Fad weight reduction diets
 - Harmful substances such as, alcohol, tobacco and drugs.
 - Excessive intake of fat, salt, caffeine, sugar, and artificial sweeteners.

Nutritional Needs of Postpartum Women *(continued)*



Choose **MyPlate**.gov

Serving Sizes:

Dairy:

- 2 cups cottage cheese
- 8 oz yogurt
- 1 1/2 oz cheese
- 1 cup milk

Grains:

- 1 slice of bread
- 1/2 cup rice, pasta, or oatmeal
- 6 inch tortilla

Protein:

- 1 oz meal, poultry, or fish
- 1/4 cup dry beans
- 1 TBSP peanut butter
- 1 egg
- 1/2 oz nuts
- 1/4 cup tofu

Nutritional Needs of Postpartum Women *(continued)*

Weight

- It is wise to wait until the baby is at least two months old before making a specific effort to lose weight. A woman's body needs about this much time to recover from the birth.
- Do try to remember that your pregnancy weight wasn't gained overnight so it won't disappear that quickly, either.
- In our day-to-day lives, most of us have food habits that are not "ideal", but are still good enough to ensure that we have a sufficient quantity of the right kinds of food.

Postpartum Depression

- Can occur up to a year after delivery
- Feelings of anxiety, tearfulness, and irritation are common in the week or two after delivery. Commonly called "Baby Blues"
- Can be caused by:
 - Changes in hormone levels
 - Changes in work/social relationships
 - Having less time and freedom for yourself
 - Lack of sleep
- Symptoms
 - Agitation or irritability
 - Changes in appetite or trouble sleeping
 - Feelings of worthlessness or guilt
 - Feeling withdrawn or unconnected
 - Lack of pleasure or interest in most or all activities
 - Negative feelings toward baby
 - Thoughts of death or suicide
- Treatment
 - Call health care provider
 - Ask partner, friends, and family for help with the baby or home
 - Don't make any major life changes during pregnancy or right

Be Aware

- Smoking and second hand smoke can harm you and your baby.
 - Babies can get more ear infections, sinus infections, colds and pneumonia
 - Babies can be more prone to asthma and breathing problems
 - Increases the risk of SIDs in babies
 - Increases risk of gum disease, tooth decay, ulcers, high blood pressure, heart attacks and strokes in women who smoke
 - Damages DNA which can lead to cancer
 - Decreases fertility in women, possibly causing miscarriage or premature delivery
 - Women who take birth control have an increase risk in strokes if they smoke
- If you drink alcoholic beverages, do so in moderation. Moderation is no more than one drink per day. One drink is defined as:
 - 12 oz beer
 - 5 oz of wine
 - 12 oz wine cooler
 - 1 1/2 liquor (a shot)

Information from La Leche League International.

Montana WIC Program
 1400 Broadway, Cogswell Building C305
 PO Box 202951
 Helena MT 59620-2951
 1-800-433-4298
<http://wic.mt.gov>

U.S. Department of Agriculture Center for Nutrition Policy and Promotion
www.choosemyplate.gov

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Nutritional Needs of Postpartum Women *(continued)*

Needs May Vary	<p>The number of servings from each of the food groups recommended for a postpartum woman may differ slightly depending on the postpartum woman's needs. The number of servings will depend on the woman's:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age • Body Size • Activity level • Weight before pregnancy • Weight gained during pregnancy • Breastfeeding status <p>For example, a tall, breastfeeding teen who was underweight before she became pregnant and gained only 18 pounds during her pregnancy will need more servings from the food groups than an overweight short adult woman who gained 35 pounds during pregnancy.</p>
Needs of Teens	<p>Postpartum teens have slightly greater nutritional needs than other women.</p> <p>Teens should have <u>4 servings</u> of the milk products <u>every day</u> to get the calcium needed for bone growth.</p>
Needs of Breastfeeding Women	<p>Fully breastfeeding women, when compared to non-breastfeeding women, usually need:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • About 500 more calories per day. • At least six servings from the protein food group per day. • Plenty of water. Drink 8 oz with every meal. <p>Her caloric needs will be greatest during the first six months if fully breastfeeding. If the baby is supplemented with formula the caloric intake is less.</p>
Needs of Women Recovering from C-Sections	<p>Postpartum women who are recovering from Cesarean sections (C-Section) need nutrients for healing. They need to take in adequate amount of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vitamin C • Protein
Women with Special Needs	<p>Postpartum women who have special needs, such as diabetes, hypertension, or cancer, should be referred to the Nutritionist.</p>

Common Problems

<p>Problems & Concerns</p>	<p>There are several common problems concerning postpartum women’s experience. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anemia • Constipation • Depression • Discomfort • Fatigue • Getting in shape <p>Become familiar with these problems so you can help postpartum women identify solutions.</p>
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Chart of problems & Solutions

The chart on the next two pages lists these problems and some possible solutions.

Learning Activity

Learning Activity 2: *Discussion of Postpartum Issues*, found at the end of this module will help you learn more about postpartum problems.

Common Problems *(continued)*

Problem	Solutions
<p>Anemia (low iron levels in the blood) Hemoglobin 12 g/dL or Hematocrit 35.7%</p> <p>Anemia is commonly due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low iron stores Multiple fetuses demands of pregnancy Blood loss at and after delivery (as in C-sections) 	<p>Eat iron-rich foods (such as beans and iron fortified cereals) along with Vitamin C-rich foods (such as orange juice, tomatoes, and broccoli). Vitamin C helps the body with iron absorption.</p> <p>Cook foods in cast-iron cookware.</p> <p>Continue to take prenatal vitamins or iron supplements with doctor approval.</p> <p>Decrease intake of coffee and tea (they interfere with iron absorption).</p>
<p>Constipation (less often than usual or difficult bowel movements) may be due to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Stress on stomach and intestines during delivery - Inappropriate diet 	<p><i>Recommend participant see her doctor if situation lasts for more than a week.</i></p> <p>Drink:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plenty of fluid to help keep the stool soft. • Small amounts of prune juice. • Hot or very cold liquids to bring on a bowel movement. <p>Eat high-fiber foods (such as bran cereals, whole grains, dried fruits, fresh fruits and vegetables).</p> <p>Do exercise (such as walking) each day.</p> <p>Do not force bowel movements.</p> <p>Do NOT use:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Laxatives unless advised by a doctor. • Mineral oil (it interferes with absorption of fat-soluble vitamins).
<p>Discomfort (such as breast soreness and aches and pains from delivery)</p>	<p><i>If woman is breastfeeding, refer her to a lactation specialist.</i></p> <p>Get plenty of rest</p> <p>Note: Discomfort is common among new mothers</p>

Continue on next page

Common Problems *(continued)*

Problem	Solution(s)
<p>Depression</p> <p>Postpartum Depression or “Baby Blues” are feelings of sadness after delivery and may last for up to 3-6 months.</p>	<p><i>Recommend participant to see her doctor if she appears severely depressed, cries constantly, has a blank stare, or seems unable to cope and follow-up at next visit.</i></p> <p>Postpartum depression (lasts longer):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is very common (2/3 of all new mothers experience it). • May be caused by changes in hormone levels. <p>Talk about concerns with others for emotional support and understanding.</p> <p>Participate in a new mothers support group.</p> <p>Do something special for self.</p> <p>May wish to speak with health care provider.</p>
<p>“Baby Blues”</p>	<p>Brief timeframe, usually about 2 weeks</p> <p>General sadness vs. hopelessness</p> <p>More common</p>
<p>Fatigue</p> <p>Probably the most common complaint for postpartum women.</p> <p>Fatigue is usually due to :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of sleep Trying to “do it all” 	<p>Follow a healthy diet (MyPlate for Women).</p> <p>Rest whenever possible (“nap when the baby naps” is especially helpful advice).</p> <p>Go to bed early at night to make up for sleep lost during night feedings.</p> <p>Ask family members to help out with household chores and meals.</p> <p>Keep housework simple (do only what is needed).</p>
<p>Getting in Shape</p> <p>Women often want to lose the extra weight gained during pregnancy right away.</p>	<p>Eat a nutritious diet. Cut down on high calorie food. Increased daily intake of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.</p> <p>Maintain appropriate servings sizes.</p> <p>Exercise regularly</p> <p>Breastfeed</p> <p>Do NOT:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diet during the first few weeks after delivery • Fast to lose weight • Use fad diets • Use diet supplements • Eliminate any food group, except high fat and sugar <p>To lose weight:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lose 1-2 lbs/week • Lose the last 5-10lbs gradually over several months.

Family Planning

<p>Definition</p>	<p>Family planning is planning the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of children wanted. • Timing of wanted children.
<p>Spacing Pregnancies</p>	<p>WIC recommends women wait a year or more before getting pregnant again. This time allows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each child to spend time with her/his mother. • The mother to replace the nutrients her body used during pregnancy (especially nutrients such as iron, folic acid, Vitamins B6 and B12, and calcium). • The family to adjust to the new family member. • Less financial burden on parents. <p>Waiting longer than a year is even better. Pregnancies spaced 18-23 months result in lower risk of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low birth weight. • Premature deliveries.
<p>Family Planning Methods</p>	<p>Family planning methods are ways to prevent pregnancy.</p> <p>The method a participant chooses will depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health risks (such as protection from sexually transmitted diseases). • Convenience of use. • Cost. • Effectiveness. • Lifestyle. • Reversibility. • Cultural Beliefs. <p>Refer postpartum women to their health care provider to discuss family planning.</p>

Progress Check

1. A postpartum woman will need to: *(Put a check mark next to all possible answers)*
 - Replace nutrients lost during pregnancy and delivery.
 - Eat a healthy diet.
 - Send the newborn child’s birth certificate to the Internal Revenue Service (IRS).
 - See her doctor for the postpartum medical visit.
 - Consider Family Planning

2. Fill in the food groups chart below. Write in the range of choices recommended for postpartum women, the specific number of milk product choices recommended for teens, and the number of protein foods recommended for breastfeeding women.

Food Group	Number of Choices		
	Range of Choices	Teens	Breastfeeding Women
Breads, Cereals & Grains			
Vegetables			
Fruits			
Milk Products			
Protein Foods			

3. The number of choices recommended for a postpartum woman will depend on her: *(put a check mark next to all possible answers)*
 - Breastfeeding status
 - Age
 - Weight gain during pregnancy
 - Income
 - Activity level
 - Food preferences

4. Mark the following as “TRUE” or “FALSE”.

- Vitamin C and protein are needed to help women heal after a C-section.
- Regular exercise will help a woman lose the weight gained during pregnancy.
- Constipation is never a problem for women after delivery.
- fasting is a healthy way for postpartum woman to lose weight.
- Postpartum depression only affects women who have a history of mental health problems.
- “Nap when the baby naps” is good advice for the new mother.
- To help new mothers prevent fatigue, encourage them to keep housework simple (do only what is needed) and to NOT try to “do it all”.
- The loss of blood during delivery can cause anemia.

5. Name 3 problems common to postpartum women.

6. Match the common postpartum problem to a possible solution.

Problem	Solution
<input type="checkbox"/> Anemia	A. Eat foods high in iron and Vitamin C.
<input type="checkbox"/> Constipation	B. Exercise regularly.
<input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue	C. Increase the amount of fiber in the diet.
<input type="checkbox"/> Depression	D. Nap when the baby naps.
<input type="checkbox"/> Getting in Shape	E. Join a new mother’s support group.

7. Names 3 reasons why a couple may wait a year or more between pregnancies.

Learning Activities

The following activities are included and are recommended for interactive learning:

Learning Activity 1: Birth & Postpartum Experience

Learning Activity 2: Discussion of Postpartum Issues

Learning Activity 3: Observations

Learning Activity 4: Case Studies

Learning Activity 5: Role Plays

Activity 1: Birth & Postpartum Experience

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity WIC staff will be able to describe what a new mother may experience during and after the birth of her child.

Instructions

1. Arrange to talk to a friend or relative who has recently given birth. (If this person does not feel comfortable talking about her experience, or such a person is not available to you, ask your mentor or supervisor for a CD-ROM, pamphlet, book, or video describing the postpartum period).
2. Interview your friend or relative (or review the video, CD-ROM, and/or reading materials).
3. Answer the questions on the next page.
4. Discuss your findings with your mentor or supervisor.

Activity 1: Birth & Postpartum Experience *(continued)*

What was the birth experience like for you? Did you have a vaginal or a C-Section delivery?

Did you have any complication?

- Fetal distress?
- Fetus in risky position?
- Pregnancy-induced hypertension?
- Prolonged labor?
- Other complications? _____

What emotions did you have before, during, and after the delivery?

What were the first few weeks after delivery like for you?

- Postpartum depression?
- Fatigue?
- Constipation?
- Hemorrhoids?
- Discomfort?
- Other? _____

Activity 2: Discussion of Postpartum Issues

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, WIC staff will be familiar with some of the postpartum issues in WIC.

Instructions

1. Have your supervisor or mentor arrange for you to spend about one hour with a WIC staff person.

2. Ask the staff person to discuss her/his experiences with postpartum issues at WIC.

3. Ask such questions as:

What are the most common nutrition problems among the breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum participants you see?

What are some challenges you experienced in assessing a postpartum woman's nutritional status?

What are your suggestions for new staff preparing to address the needs of postpartum women?

4. Write down your notes on the next page.

5. When you are finished, discuss your findings with your mentor or supervisor.

Activity 2: Discussion of Postpartum Issues *(continued)*

Notes:

Activity 3: Observations

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, WIC staff will be able to explain how to:

Interview a postpartum woman

Assess a postpartum woman's nutritional status

Prioritize needs

Provide individual education

Instructions

1. Have your mentor or supervisor arrange for you to observe several individual nutrition education sessions with postpartum women.

2. Observe the staff person as s/he:

Assesses the woman's needs/problems

Prioritizes these needs/problems

Provides individual education

Note staff:

Offering participant an opportunity to see a nutritionist

Using the appropriate code in the Follow-up Education section.

3. Write down your notes on the next page.

4. Discuss your observations with your mentor or supervisor.

Activity 3: Observations

Notes:

Activity 4: Case Studies

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity, WIC staff will be able to assess a postpartum woman's anthropometric, biochemical, clinical, and dietary status.

Instructions

1. Read each of the 5 case studies on the following pages.
2. Obtain the following for the case studies:
 - Pre-pregnancy weight for height table
 - BMI chart
 - ISIS terminal for simulations (if available)
3. Using the pre-pregnancy weight for height table or BMI chart, assess the woman's weight. Is her weight:
 - Under
 - Over
 - Normal
4. Identify the woman's biochemical, clinical, and dietary status.
5. Identify any referrals needed for participant.
6. Fill out the form following each case study.
7. When you are finished, discuss your responses with your supervisor or mentor.

Activity 4: Case Studies *(continued)*

Case Study 1:

Hannah is 23 years old. The following information is available about her:

Height: 5 feet, 1 inch

Weight: 150 lbs.

She had a C-section when delivering her son.

She breastfeeds her 2-month old son.

Hemoglobin: 11 gm/dL

Smokes 6-10 cigarettes/day

Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she eats a diet low in:

Fruits and vegetables

Protein

Assessment:

Weight: Normal

Overweight

Underweight

What are her anthropometric risks?

What are her biochemical risks?

What are her clinical risks?

What are her dietary risks?

Referrals:

Activity 4: Case Studies *(continued)*

Case Study 2:

Elena is 16 years old. The following information is available about her:

Height: 6 feet, 8 inches.

Weight: 166 lbs.

Hemoglobin: 12 gm/dL

Her infant daughter died at 1 week of Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).

Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she rarely eats whole grains.

Assessment:

Weight: Normal

Overweight

Underweight

What are her anthropometric risks?

What are her biochemical risks?

What are her clinical risks?

What are her dietary risks?

Referrals:

Activity 4: Case Studies *(continued)*

Case Study 3:

HuaMei is 28 years old. The following information is available about her:

Height: 5 feet, 4 inches.

Weight: 122 lbs.

Hemoglobin: 11.2 gm/dL

She miscarried at 15 weeks.

Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she drinks only ½ cup of whole milk/day and no other dairy products.

Assessment:

Weight: Normal

Overweight

Underweight

What are her anthropometric risks?

What are her biochemical risks?

What are her clinical risks?

What are her dietary risks?

Referrals:

Activity 4: Case Studies *(continued)*

Case Study 4:

Gloria is 30 years old. The following information is available about her:

Height: 5 feet, 3 inches

Weight: 163 lbs.

Hemoglobin: 10.8 gm/dL

She breastfeeds her 3 month old son.

She lives in a motel.

She has been anemic for over a year and is not taking any iron supplements.

Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she has a diet low in protein.

Assessment:

Weight: Normal

Overweight

Underweight

What are her anthropometric risks?

What are her biochemical risks?

What are her clinical risks?

What are her dietary risks?

Referrals:

Activity 4: Case Studies (*continued*)

Case Study 5:

Jamilla is 18 years old. The following information is available about her:

Height: 5 feet, 3 inches

Weight: 180 lbs.

Hemoglobin: 10.8 gm/dL

She does not breastfeed her 5 month old son.

She also has an 18 month old daughter.

Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she:

Rarely eats fruits or vegetables

Almost “lives on” nachos, pizza, and sodas

Assessment:

Weight: Normal

Overweight

Underweight

What are her anthropometric risks?

What are her biochemical risks?

What are her clinical risks?

What are her dietary risks?

Referrals:

Activity 5: Role Plays

Learning Objectives

After completing this activity WIC staff will be able to:

- Interview a postpartum woman
- Assess her nutritional status
- Prioritize her needs
- Provide individual education

Background

A role play is a scenario in which two or more people act out a scene as though it was “real life”. Props are not needed but may be helpful.

Instructions

1. Ask your mentor, supervisor, or co-worker to role play three of the five roles (A-E) described on the following page.
2. Using the information you have learned about postpartum nutrition, act out the role of a WIC Nutrition Aide in an appointment with each of these three postpartum women.
Promote breastfeeding where applicable.
3. Mentor/Supervisor/Co-worker: Using the role plays as your guide, act out the role of the participant. Be realistic as possible.
4. After each session, ask your co-worker to tell you what s/he noticed. Ask for feedback on your strengths as well as areas for improvement.

Activity 5: Role Plays *(continued)*

5 Participants

Role Play A	Cathy Douglas is 22 years old. She breastfeeds her 5 week old son whose birth weight was 10 lbs. She is 5 feet tall and weighs 110 lbs. Her hemoglobin is 11.5 gm/dL. She also has a 13 month old, 2 year old, and 3 year old. She says, "I only wanted 2 children!" Her Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she eats very few fruits and vegetables.
Role Play B	Alicia Garcia is 17 years old. She breastfed her newborn son for 1 month and then stopped. She is 5 feet, 5 inches tall and weighs 162 lbs. Her hemoglobin is 10.2 gm/dL. She had a C-section. Her Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she eats very few protein foods.
Role Play C	MeiLi Chu is 31 years old. She breastfeeds her newborn daughter. She is 5 feet, 4 inches tall and weighs 112 lbs. Her hemoglobin is 12.8 gm/dL. Her Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she drinks whole milk.
Role Play D	Selena Juarez is 26 years old. She breastfeeds her newborn twins. She is 5 feet tall and weighs 180 lbs. Her hemoglobin is 11.2 gm/dL. Her Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she eats a diet low in protein and eats few iron-rich foods.
Role Play E	Karen Johnston is 19 years old. She does not breastfeed her 3 month old son. She is 6 feet tall and weighs 170 lbs. Her hemoglobin is 11.8 gm/dL. She currently lives in a battered women's shelter. Her Nutrition Assessment Questions indicate she eats very few whole grains.

Progress Check Answers

Send completed progress check to State WIC Office attention Lacy Little. Fax: 444-0239, email: lalittle@mt.gov or mail Montana WIC, PO Box 202951, Helena, MT 59620

Activity Completion:

Send completed activities to State WIC Office attention Lacy Little. Fax: 444-0239, email: lalittle@mt.gov or mail Montana WIC, PO Box 202951, Helena, MT 59620