

What are the essential staff competencies necessary to conduct a VENA assessment?

1. Principles of life-cycle nutrition
2. Nutrition assessment process
3. Anthropometric and hematological data collection techniques
4. Communication
5. Multicultural awareness
6. Critical thinking



When will WIC staff implement VENA?

All State agencies are required by FNS to implement VENA by October 1, 2009.

Visit the WIC Works Resource System at www.nal.usda.gov/wicworks for additional guidance and implementation tools.

Clinic photos courtesy of Guam and North Carolina WIC.
The WIC Works Resource System is a collaboration of USDA's Food and Nutrition Service and the National Agricultural Library's Food and Nutrition Information Center.

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Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment

Are You Ready to Implement VENA?



The First Step in Quality Nutrition Services

What is VENA?



Value Enhanced Nutrition Assessment (VENA) was developed jointly by the Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) and the National WIC Association (NWA) to improve nutrition services in the WIC Program by establishing standards for the assessment process used to determine WIC eligibility and to personalize nutrition education, referrals, and food package tailoring. VENA is part of the larger process known as Revitalizing Quality Nutrition Services (RONS) in WIC.

Why is VENA Necessary?

The VENA initiative was developed to respond to the Institute of Medicine (IOM) report: *Dietary Risk Assessment in the WIC Program*. In its report, the IOM recommended that all women and children ages 2 to 5 years should be presumed to be at dietary risk based on failure to meet the *Dietary Guidelines for Americans*. The use of current nutrition risk criteria for eligibility determination was not to be affected by this recommendation.



As a result of the IOM report findings and recommendation for a presumed dietary risk criterion, FNS identified the need to develop comprehensive nutrition assessment guidance.

What are the Benefits of VENA?

- Provides a positive approach based on desired health outcomes rather than on deficiencies
- Allows staff and participants to use their limited time to identify individual needs and concerns
- Complements participant-centered nutrition services by creating a partnership with the participant in goal setting
- Improves staff competencies
- Provides a framework for developing nutrition assessment policies and procedures
- Enhances the quality of WIC services by linking WIC nutrition assessment to the subsequent nutrition services (nutrition education, food package, and referrals)
- Provides a comprehensive nutrition assessment that considers the mind and body in addition to environmental influences
- Establishes national standards for the nutrition assessment process