



**2025 Oregon WIC In-Service:
Substance Use Education and Lead Referral
Requirements**

Learning Objectives

- Explain the federal requirement and state policy changes related to substance use education
- List Oregon WIC's four required program referrals
- Describe WIC's role in substance use screening, education and referral
- Apply participant centered practices to reduce stigma, frame screening questions and provide education related to substance use
- Describe the requirements for lead screening and referral
- Compare the referral and education documentation requirements for substance use and lead

Federal Policy

“As an integral part of nutrition education, the State agency shall ensure that local agencies provide drug and other harmful substance abuse information to all pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women and to parents or caretakers of infants and children participating in the program.”

CFR 246.11 (a)(3)



Poll Question #1

True or False – Information on drugs and other harmful substances must be provided to all prenatal, breastfeeding and postpartum women, and parents/caregivers of infants and children.

Poll Question #1

True – Information on drugs and other harmful substances must be provided to all prenatal, breastfeeding and postpartum women, and parents/caregivers of infants and children.



Oregon WIC Policy 880: Referrals

- **NEW** requirement: lead screening & referral
- Four mandatory referrals:
 1. Medicaid (OHP)
 2. Substance use
 3. Immunizations for participants 3-24 months of age
 4. Lead screening for children

Oregon WIC Policy 880: Referrals

- Lead referral and substance use education are mandatory starting **January 1, 2026**.
 - ❖ Verbal substance use education on the harmful effects of drugs and other harmful substances is required.
 - ❖ Blood lead screening referral is required for child participants.

Poll Question #2

What are WIC's four required referrals? (select all that apply)

- ☐ Substance use
- ☐ Lead
- ☐ Health care provider
- ☐ Immunizations
- ☐ SNAP
- ☐ Medicaid
- ☐ Dentist

Poll Question #2

WIC's four required referrals are:

- ✓ Substance use
- ✓ Lead
- ✓ Immunizations
- ✓ Medicaid



WIC's role in screening,
educating and referring for
substance use

What is the WIC certifier's role?

1. Screen participants by asking simple questions to identify those at risk of substance use
2. Provide verbal education on the harms of substance use, regardless of how a participant/caregiver screens
3. Provide referrals and resources for treatment or community programs for participants needing further evaluation or support
4. Maintain confidentiality

What is **NOT** the WIC certifier's role?

1. Counseling participants to make changes to their substance use
2. Diagnosing a substance use disorder



Poll Question #3

WIC's role in providing alcohol or other drug information and referrals include: (select all that apply)

- ☐ Providing information about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drug use to all prenatal, breastfeeding and postpartum women, and parents and caregivers of infants and children.
- ☐ Counseling the participant to help them change their behavior.
- ☐ Screening participants for potential alcohol, tobacco and drug use.
- ☐ Offering referrals to alcohol, drug education or tobacco cessation and treatment organizations.

Poll Question #3

WIC's role in providing alcohol or other drug information and referrals include:

- ✓ Providing information about the dangers of alcohol, tobacco and drug use to all prenatal, breastfeeding and postpartum women, and parents and caregivers of infants and children.
- ✓ Screening participants for potential alcohol, tobacco and drug use.
- ✓ Offering referrals to alcohol, drug education or tobacco cessation and treatment organizations.



Providing substance use
education

When to offer education

- Substance use education must be provided verbally at least once during each certification period for all women participants and parents/caregivers of infants and children.
- Certifiers shall discuss the potential harmful effects of drugs or other harmful substances, regardless of current use or response to screening questions.

Framing the Screening Questions

- “One of the ways WIC supports families is by asking questions about substance use and offering education and referrals that may be helpful for you and your family. I am going to ask you some sensitive questions related to alcohol, tobacco, nicotine and drug use. Please know that your answers will be kept confidential.”
- “These next few questions are ones that I am required to ask everyone. Asking these questions helps me determine if there are any extra services or other programs you may be interested in receiving a referral to.”

How to offer education: acknowledge and affirm

- “I know you shared that you don’t use drugs or alcohol. Part of my job here at WIC is to share that **there are possible health risks associated with different substances**. Are you interested in additional information?”
- “WIC promotes a healthy lifestyle for parents and their families. **Substance use can have harmful effects on the whole family**. WIC provides substance use prevention information and referrals to increase awareness about the dangers of substance use. Would you be interested in more information?”
- “As a public health nutrition program, we at WIC share with all participants that **alcohol, cannabis and other drugs are potentially harmful to you and your baby’s health**. We have more information and resources available if you have questions.”



Affirmations

- "It's great that you are committed to a healthy pregnancy."
- "I know how important it is for you to have a healthy pregnancy. Your decision to avoid substances is crucial to make sure that you do."
- "It sounds like you had trouble in the past and it took a lot of courage to kick that habit. You are on the right path now to be healthier for you and your kids. I am proud of you."

If a participant discloses substance use:

1. Maintain participant-centered skills and avoid judgmental statements. Show compassion and care.
2. Provide a confidential referral in simple and clear language.

"Thank you for sharing that information with me. Your concern for your baby will help you be a great parent. Would it be okay if I gave you some resources at the end of today's appointment?"

Tips for providing referrals

- Normalize providing the referral
 - “We routinely give referral and resource information in case you or a family member wants more information or support with substance use.”
 - “Quitting is hard, but we are here to help. You are not alone. I can provide you with a referral today to talk to someone about quitting.”
- Confidentiality
 - “The referral I made today is confidential.”
- Familiarize yourself with local resources
 - “I am going to circle some numbers and websites for you, your family, or anyone who you know who might find them helpful or are looking for some support.”
 - “I am going to text you a link for you, your family, or anyone you know who might find it helpful or are looking for support.”

Substance Use Referral and Documentation Requirements

Substance Use	
Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response to screening question in health assessment that indicates referral was made (required)• Referral tab (optional)• Progress note with additional information (optional)
*Verbal Education Documentation (optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress note• Related NE dropdown topics:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Smoking/secondhand smoke"• "Alcohol and/or drug use"

**Substance use education is required, although does not count as NE for the visit.*



Lead screening and referral



Screening for Elevated Blood Lead Levels

- The [2024 Nutrition Risk Update](#) in-service has more information about lead, such as background information, testing requirements and providing lead-related nutrition education.
- Lead screening and referral will be required for all children beginning **January 1, 2026**.
- The lead question on the Health History questionnaire will be required and certifiers must ask this question at each certification and mid-certification.
- If a child has not been screened or tested for their blood lead level, a referral is required. Refer to a health care provider or local public health department.
- When referring, you can use the [referral card](#).

Poll Question #4

True or False – Lead screening is required for children only at certification.

Poll Question #4

False – Lead screening is required for children at both certification and mid-certification.

Lead Referral and Documentation Requirements

Lead Screening	
Referral	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Response to screening question in health assessment that indicates referral was made (required)• Referral tab (optional)
Nutrition Education Documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Progress notes• NE dropdown topic:<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Lead"

Poll Question #5

Which of the following statements are true:

- The lead referral must be documented in the referral tab, while the substance use referral does not need to be documented.
- The substance use referral must be documented in the referral tab, while the lead referral does not need to be documented.
- The substance use and lead referral(s) can be documented using the appropriate dropdown in the Health History screen.
- Neither lead nor substance use referrals need to be documented.

Poll Question #5

- ✓ The substance use and lead referral(s) can be documented using the appropriate dropdown in the Health History screen.



Substance Use Resources



Pregnant people and new moms with substance use or misuse experience societal stigmas, which can impact access to treatment, cause social isolation, and create feelings of guilt or shame about the risks to the health of their baby.

March of Dimes – Beyond Labels: Substance Use Disorder Stigma Stories

Educational resources



- <https://oregon.wicresources.org/>
- WICHealth.org
 - [Alcohol, chemicals and drugs: Substances to avoid now](#) (English, Spanish)
 - [Taking care of you and your baby: Avoid marijuana, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs](#) (English, Spanish, Arabic, French, Haitian Creole, Somali, Swahili)

Educational resources

- Cannabis, You and Your Baby (OHA – [8 languages available](#))
- [Children and Marijuana Don't Mix](#) (OHA)
- Give Your Baby a Healthy Start: Tips for Pregnant Women and New Mothers (USDA – [English](#), [Spanish](#))
- Alcohol and Your Pregnancy (HHS – [English](#), [Spanish](#))



Providing Referrals

If substance use is identified during screening, certifiers are required to offer a referral and available local resources:

1. Local agency-developed resource/referral guide that include substance abuse counseling and treatment facilities, and smoking/tobacco cessation programs in your community
2. [Oregon Substance Use Disorders Services Directory](#)
3. [211info](#)
4. [Lines for Life](#): Oregon's home to 988, as well as the Alcohol & Drug Helpline and The Oregon Hopeline.
5. [Nurture Oregon](#): Supporting pregnant people who have used substances during their pregnancy by providing integrated care to them, their family, and their baby through one year postpartum. *Serving Benton, Deschutes, Jackson, Lincoln and Umatilla counties.*

Creating a trauma-informed clinic environment



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**SMALL
STEPS
MATTER.**

It can be a struggle every day to not drink or use drugs. Every step you take to stop drinking alcohol or using drugs will help you and your family.

YOU ARE NOT ALONE.

Ask for help here to learn more about supports and services in the community, or call 211 for more information.

Adapted from materials provided by the Education Training Council, Alberta FASD Cross Ministry Committee.

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57-415 Rev 11/2019



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**CADA
PASO
CUENTA.**

Cada día puede ser difícil no tomar alcohol o drogas. Cada paso o esfuerzo que haga para dejar de tomar alcohol o usar drogas va a ayudar a usted y a su familia.

USTED NO ESTÁ SOLO(A).

Pida ayuda aquí para recibir información acerca de apoyo y servicios disponibles en la comunidad, o llame al 211.

Adapted from materials provided by the Education Training Council, Alberta FASD Cross Ministry Committee.

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Summary

1. Screening for substance use and providing verbal education is **required** at least once during the certification period for pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, and to parents or caretakers of infants and children on WIC, regardless of screening response.
2. Using participant-centered skills such as **framing and affirming** can be helpful when asking sensitive questions and providing education and referrals.
3. Providing substance use and lead referrals and resources are **required**, as appropriate. This helps support the health of Oregon WIC families.

Special thanks to Guam WIC, Colorado WIC, Washington WIC and California WIC for contributing to this in-service.



Thank you!

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