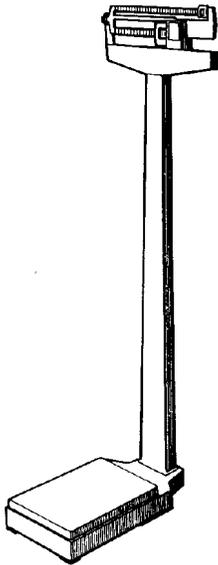


Measuring Standing Weight of Children and Adults

Equipment

A beam balance scale with a platform and non-detachable free-sliding weights is recommended. The scale should be marked in increments of not less than four ounces (1/4 pound). It must have a zeroing adjustment (screw type preferred). Electronic scales are not generally used in Colorado WIC clinics because of added expense for purchasing, maintaining, and repairing the scales.



NOTE: The scale must rest on a firm, non-carpeted surface.

NOTE: Spring balance scales (such as bathroom scales) are not recommended. The spring counter balance loses accuracy over time and many scales are not capable of reading more accurately than one-half pound. Most bathroom scales are difficult to read since measurements are read at floor level.

Technique

1. The participant is asked to remove all heavy clothing (such as coats, heavy sweaters, snowsuits) and shoes. The prenatal client must be weighed in light clothing consistently throughout pregnancy. Children must also be weighed in light clothing.
2. It is confirmed that the sliding weights on the horizontal beam are in the zero position and that the scale is in balance.
3. The participant is asked to stand in the center of the platform with their body upright and arms hanging naturally at their sides. It is important that the participant stand in the center of the scale in order to get an accurate weight.
4. The appropriate weights are moved back and forth until the arrow on the right-hand of the scale rests in the exact center.

5. The measurement is recorded on a growth grid for boys/ girls 2-5 years of age or a prenatal weight gain grid for pregnant women. For breastfeeding and non-breastfeeding postpartum women the weight is only recorded in ASPENS (since their weights are no longer plotted on any grids).
6. The weights are returned to the zero position on the left-hand side of the scale.
7. The information is recorded in the ASPENS system, WICPS105 Update Infant/Child Visit Data for children or WICPS104 Update Woman Visit Data for women.

It is important to respect the participant's confidentiality and sensitivity concerning their weight. Care should be taken to not embarrass the participant by announcing their weight in such a way that others in the clinic may hear it.

Maintenance

The scale must be kept in zero balance. The scale should be zeroed before each session and whenever the scale is transported. Refer to the section on measuring weight for infants for information on maintaining the scale and making periodic checks of the scale's accuracy.

Participants who are unable to stand or are too large to be weighed

When participants are unable to stand due to physical impairment other ways of weighing need to be investigated. If the participant is a child weights may be obtained in their parent's arms. The parent is weighed first and then the parent and child are weighed together. The child's weight is obtained by subtracting the two weights. Notation should be made on the growth grid indicating that this is how the weight was obtained. For adults who are unable to stand it may be possible to find other facilities where a weight can be obtained, for example a clinic or physician's office where the adult receives health care or therapy. Ask the participant to bring weight measurements with them to their WIC appointments. Again,

notation should be made on their weight record as to where or how the weight was obtained.

If a participant's weight is too great to be measured on the WIC scale ask if the participant is being weighed at their physician's office. If the answer is yes ask them to bring their weight to the WIC appointment. It is important to respect the integrity of the participant under such circumstances. It would be inappropriate to suggest that the participant go to a loading dock to be weighed on an industrial scale. It may be necessary to forego obtaining a participant's weight under such conditions. Under these circumstances the participant's nutrition care and assessment need to be redirected to look more closely at diet or the participant's perception of her weight rather than on actual weight gain or loss. Participants in this situation should be seen by the WIC professional for assessment and follow up. Because no weight is available a series of 9s should be entered as the woman's weight in ASPENS (be sure to completely fill the weight box with 9s so that ASPENS understands the weight as an unknown). Notation should be placed in the participant's ASPENS education record explaining why a weight was not obtained.

#5 Practice!



Mark the following statements T (True) or F (False).

- A. ___ Participants should be weighed with their shoes on.
- B. ___ Scales must be balanced at zero before each weighing.
- C. ___ Participants should not wear coats, heavy sweaters, or boots, or hold purses, packages, or toys while being weighed, as these items add weight on the scale.
- D. ___ It is important that the participant stand in the center of the scale's platform to get an accurate weight.
- E. ___ Adult and child weights should be measured to the nearest pound.