

Recipient of Abuse**Definition/
cut-off value**

Battering or child abuse/neglect within past 6 months as self-reported, or as documented by a social worker, health care provider or on other appropriate documents, or as reported through consultation with a social worker, health care provider, or other appropriate personnel.

"Battering" generally refers to violent physical assaults on women.

Child abuse/neglect: "Any recent act or failure to act resulting in imminent risk of serious harm, death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse, or exploitation of an infant or child by a parent or caretaker (2)."

If State law requires the reporting of known or suspected child abuse or neglect, WIC staff must release such information to appropriate State officials. WIC regulations pertaining to confidentiality do not take precedence over such State law.

**Participant
category and
priority level**

Category	Priority
Pregnant Women	IV
Breastfeeding Women	IV
Non-Breastfeeding Women	VI
Infants	IV
Children	V

Justification

Battering during pregnancy is associated with increased risks of low birth weight, pre-term delivery, and chorioamnionitis, as well as poor nutrition and health behaviors. Battered women are more likely to have a low maternal weight gain, be anemic, consume an unhealthy diet, and abuse drugs, alcohol, and cigarettes.

Serious neglect and physical, emotional, or sexual abuse have short- and long-term physical, emotional, and functional consequences for children.

Nutritional neglect is the most common cause of poor growth in infancy and may account for as much as half of all cases of nonorganic failure to thrive.

**Clarification/
Guidelines**

If you are reporting a teen under the Rider 14 law, you must also assign this risk condition when the sexual abuse occurred within the past six months. This risk condition should be automatically assigned regardless if the answer to risk code 901 on the Health History form is "No."

References

1. Institute of Medicine: WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria: A Scientific Assessment; 1996; pp. 317-321.
2. The Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act Reauthorized; October 1996; Public Law 104-25.