

**LOS ANGELES COUNTY
COMPREHENSIVE PERINATAL SERVICES PROGRAM**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PERINATAL FOOD FREQUENCY QUESTIONNAIRE

The Perinatal Food Frequency Questionnaire (PFFQ) is used to determine the different foods a patient eats each day or week. This dietary information is used together with anthropometric (height/weight), biochemical (labs), and clinical information to complete the nutrition component of the Prenatal Initial Combined Assessment/Reassessment Tool (ICA).

FOOD INTAKE & FREQUENCY

A nutrition assessment needs to be completed on every woman, initially and at least once each trimester, *using a Perinatal Food Frequency Questionnaire*. The questionnaire will help the evaluator:

- assess the patient's nutritional status;
- compare what and how much she eats to the *Daily Food Guide* recommendations;
- help her find foods she enjoys in food groups where she doesn't eat enough; and
- learn about her food habits, culture, family, and lifestyle

HOW TO DO A PERINATAL FOOD FREQUENCY QUESTIONNAIRE - (PFFQ)

The Perinatal Food Frequency Questionnaire (PFFQ) uses the seven food groups from the *Daily Food Guide for Women*. Foods are grouped according to similar nutrients and one food can be exchanged for another within the same group. Eating the recommended number of servings in groups 1-6 assures that a pregnant or breastfeeding woman will eat at least 90% of the Recommended Dietary Allowances (RDA) for protein, vitamins, and minerals. Eating the recommended servings in the "Other Foods" group (identified with the triangle ▲ symbol), assures appropriate intake of unsaturated fats and vitamin E.

Either the client or evaluator can complete the questionnaire. The client instructions are at the top of the page of the PFFQ. **Note:** although it states "*if you eat the food less than 1 time per week, do not mark columns,*" this information must be reviewed and totaled by the evaluator who should fill in any blanks with a "0". The "Other Foods" group is not scored, but is evaluated to capture the intake of unsaturated fats.

Record the final scores of the PFFQ in question #90 of the ICA- "Nutrition Assessment Summary". **A completed PFFQ is also required for each trimester reassessment and postpartum assessment and must remain in the chart.** Completing a PFFQ takes practice. Speed and accuracy will come as more questionnaires are completed.

The PFFQ uses a **point system** to determine if the diet is adequate. The points in the *bottom left corner* of each box – in parentheses - are equal to the recommended number of servings in the Daily Food Guide multiplied by 7 (**1 serving equals 7 points**). For example: In Group 1 (Protein), a patient needs 21 points. This is equal to 3 "servings."

Follow the Steps Below:

1. Explain what you are going to do:

"I am going to read off a list of foods. For each food tell me the number of times you eat that food every day. If you do not eat that food daily, tell me how many times you eat that food each week."

2. Fill out the PFFQ:

As you read off the foods, write in the client's answers. If she eats the food every day, write down her answer in the **Daily** column. If she does not eat a food every day, write down her answer in the **Weekly** column. If she eats the food less than one time per week, document a zero.

3. Score the PFFQ:

After filling out the answers for all the food groups, go back and add up the totals for groups 1-6. For each group:

- a Add all the numbers in the **Daily** column and write that number on the **Subtotals** line, to the left of " x 7="". Multiply this number by 7 and write in the total to the right of the "x 7 = ".
- b Add all the numbers in the **Weekly** column and write that total on the **Subtotals** line.
- c Add the subtotals from the **Daily** column and **Weekly** column. Write the total on the last line next to **Total Points**.

4. Discuss the changes she should make to her diet:

Review each food group and provide suggestions to help client meet her needs. Use the following information to help evaluate her needs:

- a Compare the **Total Points** of each group with the **Recommended Points** (found in *parentheses* in the lower left corner of each box (*shaded area*)).
 - b If the **Recommended Points** are greater than the **Total Points**, the client is not meeting her minimum needs for that group. To advise her on how many servings to add to her daily diet **subtract** the **Total Points** from the **Recommended Points** and divide the answer by 7. This number is the number of servings from that group the client needs to add to her diet every day.
- * The diet is low in total protein only if the combined points of groups 1 and 2 are less than 35.
- * A star (*) next to a food indicates that this food is high in folate. A diet may be low in folate if the total for all starred foods is less than 7.
- * A triangle (▲) next to a food indicates that it is high in unsaturated fats. A diet may be low in unsaturated fats if the total intake is less than 3.

- c If the **Total Points** is greater than the **Recommended Points** you will need to evaluate whether a decrease in servings is necessary. (Remember that the **Recommended Points** is the minimum number suggested: a greater intake may be encouraged.) Use the following guidelines to advise the client:

Groups 1 & 2:

Encourage client to eat the lower fat sources from these groups (chicken, fish and beans from Group 1; low-fat/nonfat dairy from Group 2). Determine whether a high intake of foods from these groups interferes with an adequate intake from other groups. If intake from these groups is very high, suggest replacing some servings from these groups with servings from the other groups that are deficient.

Group 3:

Encourage client to eat whole grains. Remind client to limit high fat additions to foods, like butter, margarine, or cream sauces. Determine whether a high intake of foods from this group interferes with an adequate intake from other groups. If intake from this group is very high, suggest replacing some servings from this group with servings from the other groups that are deficient.

Groups 4, 5, & 6:

A high intake from these groups should be encouraged. Remind client to eat a variety of foods from each group. Be sure fruit intake includes both juices and whole fruits. Remind client to limit intake of fried vegetables and limit higher fat additions to vegetables, like butter, cheese, or cream sauces.

“Other Foods” Group:

This group is not scored, but is important to evaluate the intake of unsaturated fats. In general, more than 3 servings per day of foods that are high in fat or sugar may lead to excess weight or displacement of more nutritious foods.

It is recommended that fat be limited to the items indicated with the triangle (▲), which are high in unsaturated fat. Encourage clients to eat these foods in moderation. Determine whether a high intake of foods from this group interferes with an adequate intake from other groups. If intake from this group is very high, suggest replacing some servings from this group with servings from groups that are deficient. Check the client’s weight. If she is overweight, or if she is gaining weight too quickly, advise her to limit these foods. If she is underweight, or if she is gaining weight too slowly, advise her to eat adequate amounts from all the food groups, and then add these extra foods.

Incorporating PFFQ Information Into Initial Combined Assessment/Reassessment Tool

The PFFQ information needs to be transferred to the “Nutrition Assessment Summary” section (question #90) of the ICA. Transfer the **Total Points** from each food group (1-6) to the corresponding food group line in question # 90. (Remember to put a check in the box for “Food Frequency (7 days)” to indicate that you used a PFFQ rather than a 24-hour diet recall. Circle the word “**points**” in **Part a** “Food Group”/ column 2 “Servings/Points.”

1. If **Recommended Points** are greater than **Total Points**:
 1. Subtract **Total Points** from **Recommended Points**.
 2. Divide this total by 7. Write this number in the column under “**Suggested Changes**”
 3. Circle the “+” sign under “**Suggested Changes**.”
3. If the **Total Points** are greater than **Recommended Points**:
 - a. Subtract **Recommended Points** from **Total Points**.
 - b. Divide this total by 7. Write this number in the column under “**Suggested Changes**”
 - c. Circle the “-” sign under “**Suggested changes**.”
4. Complete **Part b** for initial assessment.
5. Repeat above steps for each reassessment and postpartum visit.

DIETARY ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

This section must be completed by the Evaluator for the Initial Combined Assessment (ICA), and for 2nd and 3rd trimester reassessments, and for postpartum assessment.

- Diet Inadequate/Excessive In:

Compare actual points with recommended points. Note which food groups/nutrients are inadequate or excessive and list them in appropriate areas. For initial assessment, transfer this information to the “*Nutrition Assessment Summary*” of the ICA.

- Comments /Needs:

Note any pertinent findings from Food Groups 1-6 and “Other Foods”. This information may be useful in development of the Individualized Care Plan (ICP).

- Nutrition Intervention:

Summarize what you have done for the woman by checking the appropriate intervention(s) as follows:

- >check when you have completed counseling for identified problems; check if you have given a brochure (*you may note which one*); check if you have referred high risk patients to the Registered Dietitian (R.D.) per protocols.

Sign and date tool; record the woman’s name and ID/chart information.

Note: A 24-hour diet recall may be used instead of a Food Frequency Questionnaire, but the provider must demonstrate that staff have been adequately trained and knowledgeable in its use.

8/17/05