

## Low Birth Weight

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### Definition/ cut-off value

Birth weight defined as less than or equal to 5 pounds 8 ounces (#2500 g), for infants and children less than 24 months old.

**Note:** See “Guidelines for Growth Charts and Gestational Age Adjustment for Low Birth Weight and Very Low Birth Weight Infants” for more information about the anthropometric assessment and nutritional care of LBW and VLBW infants.

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### Participant category and priority level

Category	Priority
Infants	I
Children <24 months old	III

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### Justification

Low birth weight (LBW) is one of the most important biologic predictors of infant death. Deficiencies in physical and mental development during childhood among those babies who survive continue to be a strong predictor of growth in early childhood. Infants and children born with LBW/VLBW, particularly if caused by fetal growth restriction, need an optimal nutrient intake to survive and meet the needs of an extended period of relatively rapid postnatal growth, and complete their growth and development (1).

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### Clarifications/ Guidelines

DO NOT assign this risk code if the infant qualifies for risk code 143, Very Low Birth Weight: Birth weight defined as less than or equal to 3 pounds 5 ounces (#1500 g).

This risk code may be used for premature infants, i.e., infants born before completing the 37<sup>th</sup> week gestation.

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### References

#### Cited Reference

1. Institute of Medicine: WIC Nutrition Risk Criteria: A Scientific Assessment. Washington (DC): National Academy Press; 1996. p. 97.

#### Additional Reference

1. Anderson DM. Nutritional implications of premature birth, birth weight, and gestational age classification. In: Groh-Wargo S, Thompson M, Cox J, editors. Nutritional care for high-risk newborns. Rev. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Chicago: Precept Press, Inc.; 2000.
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