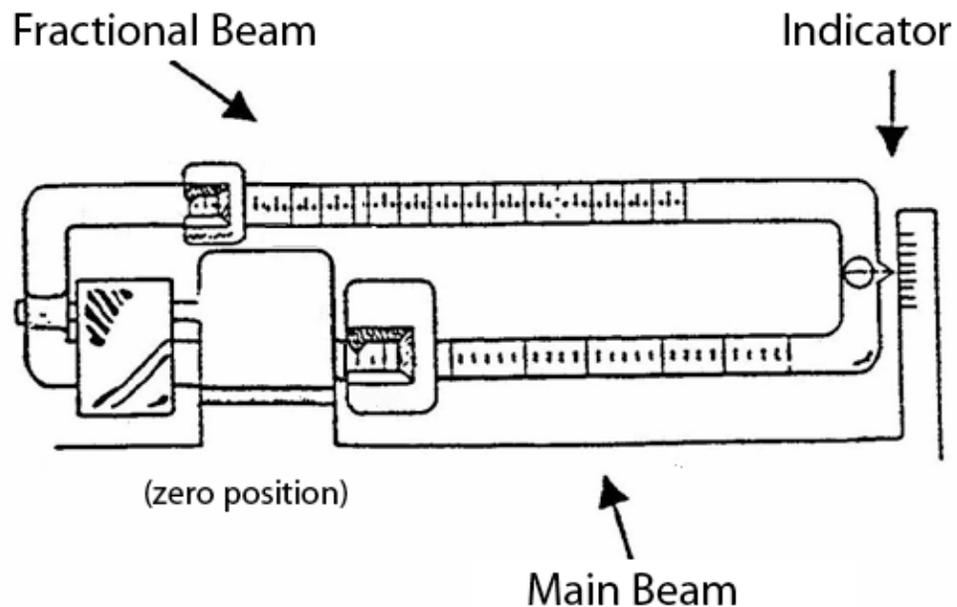


Measuring The Weight Of An Infant Using A Balance Beam Or Electronic Scale

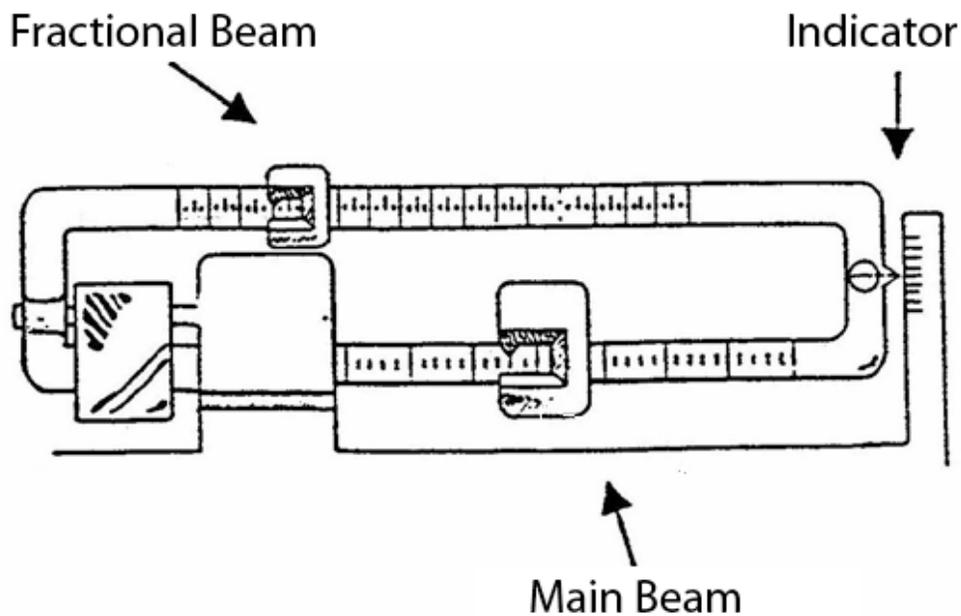
1. Wash hands (optional) and put clean paper liner on scale.
2. Have the mother remove the infant's outer clothes, such as jackets, and shoes. Usually a diaper and shirt or onesie is fine. Document if clothing is worn due to the temperature in the clinic.
3. Have the mother/caregiver make sure the diaper is dry; change it if needed. A wet diaper can weigh as much as two pounds! (WHO).
4. Have the caregiver lie the infant down in the center of the scale. Older children do better if placed sitting up in the center of the scale. Make sure the baby is not touching anything outside the tray and the mother is not touching the baby or any part of the baby is hanging outside, as this can add weight to the child and/or provide an inaccurate reading.
5. Balance the scales to zero:
 - a. **If using a balance beam scale**, make sure the weights on the two beams, the upper and lower, are directly over their zero positions.



- b. **If using a digital scale**, turn it on and make sure it is set to zero. Make sure the scale is set to pounds, not kilograms.

6. Taking the reading:

- a. **If using a balance beam scale**, first move the large counterbalance on the lower beam away from the zero position, until the indicator drops below the halfway point or center position. This means a bit too much weight has been added. You can then move the counter balance back one position, which will cause the indicator arm to rise above the center. Then move the upper beam counterweight over slowly until the indicator arm balances at the halfway point or in the center as below:



- b. ***If using a digital scale**, wait until the scale finishes changing between weights.
7. Read and record the weight. Many states record the weight to the nearest .5 ounces. (Check your state's requirement.)
8. Return the weights to the zero position at the left-hand side of the scale to help maintain scale accuracy, and have the caregiver remove the child.
9. Take a second measurement by having the caregiver place the child back onto the scale.
- If the two measurements are within 1 ounce, you can enter either of the two measurements into the WIC computer system.
 - If the two measurements are not within 1 ounce, take a third measurement, then take the two closest measurements of the three, and average them. This value can then be entered into the WIC computer system.
 - Make sure to check on your state's requirements on this procedure.

***Note:** If your agency has a digital scale that takes several measurements in a short time frame, then displays the average of those weights, it is acceptable for you to only weigh once. To use this method at your clinic, it must be documented that your scale operates in this way.

What To Do With Uncooperative Infants

We must have anthropometric data to determine WIC eligibility; therefore, if a child is uncooperative, you can:

- Have someone distract the child so the measurements can be made
- Have the mother offer a reward to the child, such as toy or sticker
- Complete other work, then come back to taking measurements

If a child is hysterical, screaming or kicking and cannot be comforted, the child can be weighed in his caregiver's arms. Take the weight of the caregiver, then the weight of the caregiver with the child. The difference will be the weight of the child. You must document that the weight was measured this way by writing:

"Weight obtained in caregiver's arms."