



NHS Healthy Start

Information for health professionals, local authorities
and supporting organisations.

What is NHS Healthy Start?

The scheme helps young families and those who are pregnant to access healthy food, milk and vitamins.

Eligibility for the scheme also depends on the benefit the person receives and what their income is.

Beneficiaries will get:

- **£4.25** each week of their pregnancy (from the 10th week of pregnancy)
- **£8.50** each week for children from birth to one year old
- **£4.25** each week for children between one and four years old

The payments will stop on the child's 4th birthday or if they no longer receive the qualifying benefits.

NHS Healthy Start beneficiaries can buy:

- **plain liquid cow's milk**, including long-life, pasteurised or ultra heat treated (UHT) varieties of milk. This does not include milk which has had chemicals, vitamins, flavours or colours added or removed.
- **fresh, frozen and tinned fruit and vegetables**, including loose, pre-packed, whole, sliced, chopped or mixed fruit or vegetables, fruit in fruit juice, or fruit or vegetables in water, but not those to which fat, salt, sugar or flavouring have been added
- **cow's milk-based infant formula milk**. This must be labelled as suitable for use from birth and satisfy, by itself, an infant's nutritional needs
- **fresh, dried and tinned pulses**, including but not limited to lentils, beans, peas and chickpeas but not those to which fat, salt, sugar or flavouring have been added

Beneficiaries of the scheme can also collect the following free Healthy Start vitamins from their local distributors:

- Women's vitamins for those who are pregnant or have a child up to one year old
- Children's vitamin drops for children up to four years old.



Who is eligible?

To qualify for the NHS Healthy Start scheme, an applicant must be at least 10 weeks pregnant or have at least one child under four years old.

In addition, they must be receiving any of the following:

- Child Tax Credit (if the family's annual income is £16,190 or less)
- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (which includes the child addition)
- Universal Credit (if the family's take-home pay is £408 or less per month from employment)

They may also be eligible for NHS Healthy Start if:

- they're under 18 and pregnant, even if they're are not claiming any benefits
- they claim income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are over 10 weeks pregnant
- they or their partner get Working Tax Credit run-on only. (Working Tax Credit run-on is the Working Tax Credit they receive in the four weeks immediately after they have stopped working for 16 hours or more per week)

No Recourse to Public Funds (NRPF) application criteria

In June 2021, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) agreed to temporarily extend the Healthy Start scheme to British children (aged under four), whose parent or guardian meets the financial eligibility criteria and are excluded from claiming public funds as a consequence of their immigration status, or their lack of immigration status.

To qualify for the temporary extension, applicants must meet all of the following criteria:

- have a child, or more than one child, who is aged under four;
- their family's take-home pay is less than £408 per month
- they are excluded from claiming public funds as a consequence of their immigration status or their lack of immigration status

If the applicant meets the eligibility criteria and would like to apply, they should email Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk and DHSC will contact them to discuss the application process.

The application process

- People can apply to the NHS Healthy Start scheme online at www.healthystart.nhs.uk.
- If someone cannot apply online, they can apply over the telephone by calling the NHS Healthy Start helpline on **0300 330 7010**.
- A telephone translation service is also available when calling the helpline.
- The NHS Healthy Start helpline is available **Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm**.
- The online application process enables someone to apply on the applicant's behalf. The claimant must be present during the application process to confirm their personal information and accept the prepaid card terms and conditions.
- Beneficiaries can contact the automated service on **0300 330 2090** to activate their card, check their balance, get their PIN or report a card as lost or stolen. This line is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The beneficiary journey



Applies at www.healthystart.nhs.uk
or by calling **0300 330 7010**



Completes the online process and is successful



Receives the prepaid card in the post within
10 working days



Activates the prepaid card and receives PIN by
calling **0300 330 2090**



Uses the prepaid card in most retailers that
sell the eligible healthy food and milk items
and accept Mastercard®



Uses the prepaid card as proof of eligibility to
collect free Healthy Start vitamins