Free milk, fruit, veg and vitamins for you and your family

For me

Healthy Start

To apply please see the form inside www.healthystart.nhs.uk
All about Healthy Start

Healthy Start is here to help you give your family the very best start in life.

If you’re pregnant or have a young child under four you could get Healthy Start vouchers worth £3.10 a week for you and your child.

The vouchers can be spent on milk, fruit, veg and infant formula milk at your local shops and supermarkets, plus you’ll get coupons for free vitamins too.

And if your children enjoy eating healthy food when they’re tiny, their good eating habits will stay with them for a lifetime!

Contents

What vouchers do I get? 1
What can I buy? 2
Do I qualify? 3
Who uses them? 4
A few Q & As 6
Who to contact 7
How do I claim? 8
Dos and don’ts 9
Handy checklist 10
So what vouchers do I get?

- If you’re pregnant you get one voucher a week worth £3.10
- For each baby under the age of one, you get two vouchers a week worth a total of £6.20
- For each child aged over one and under four, your family gets one voucher a week worth £3.10

And if you’re pregnant, or have a child under four, you’ll also get coupons for vitamins. Vitamin tablets for you; drops for your baby or child. Helping them to grow up strong and healthy.
What can I buy with my vouchers?

- Liquid cow's milk
- Fresh fruit
- Fresh vegetables
- Infant formula milk

You can use them at local shops and greengrocers as well as supermarkets. To find your nearest participating shops go to www.healthystart.nhs.uk or call the Healthy Start helpline on 0845 607 6823.

And don't forget your vitamins. Make sure you ask your midwife or health visitor where you can exchange your coupons for vitamins for you and your child locally.
Do I qualify?

You qualify for Healthy Start if you’re at least 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under four years old AND you or your family get...

- Income Support, or
- Income-based Job Seeker’s Allowance, or
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, or
- Child Tax Credit (but not Working Tax Credit unless your family is receiving Working Tax Credit run-on only*) AND an annual family income of £16,190 or less in 2010/11.

You also qualify if you are under 18 and pregnant, even if you don’t get any of the above benefits or tax credits.

* Working Tax Credit run-on is the Working Tax Credit you receive in the 4 weeks immediately after you have stopped working for 16 hours or more per week.
Who uses Healthy Start vouchers?

Sabrina & Alesha

Sabrina has a three-month-old baby girl called Alesha and is on Income Support as well as Child Tax Credit.

Each week, she gets vouchers worth £6.20 – that's over £322.00 in vouchers by Alesha's first birthday! Right now Sabrina is breastfeeding, so she is using the vouchers for milk, fruit and vegetables for herself until Alesha goes onto solid food. She gets her free vitamins from the local children's centre – and knows that by taking them herself she's helping Alesha too.

Angela & her unborn baby

Angela is pregnant. She's 17 years old and lives at home with her parents, who don't claim any benefits.

She gets one Healthy Start voucher worth £3.10 every week – and she'll keep on getting them until her baby is born. Angela also picks up free Healthy Start vitamins from her midwife, helping to make sure her and her unborn baby get everything they need.
Cheryl & Lee

25-year old Cheryl is a pregnant single mum with a three-year-old boy called Lee. She's not working and gets the highest rate of Child Tax Credit. Cheryl gets one £3.10 Healthy Start voucher each week for Lee. She also gets another £3.10 voucher each week for herself.

That's £6.20 every week to spend on milk, fruit and vegetables – and she'll get another voucher each week when her new baby is born. Because she's on Healthy Start, Cheryl also gets free vitamin supplements from her local baby clinic.

So...

To find out how Healthy Start could help you, why not talk to your midwife or health visitor, when you get the chance? They're always happy to offer help and advice about health, including healthy eating and breastfeeding. They'll also be able to tell you about local support services such as Sure Start Children's Centres and family centres for pregnant women and families with young children.
A few questions and answers

How long will it take to get my vouchers?
Once we get your application form we'll check that we've got all the information we need. If everything is there and you qualify, we'll write back to you within two weeks. If you don't hear back from us within two weeks call the Healthy Start helpline on 0845 607 6823.

How often do I get my vouchers?
Once you're on the scheme, we'll send you Healthy Start vouchers every four weeks, and a vitamin coupon every eight weeks.

What happens if I don't fill out the form properly?
We'll have to send it back to you – or if we've got your phone number, we might be able to sort it out that way. Either way it'll delay your application, so double-check all your details!

Why do I need to put my National Insurance number on the form?
It's to check that you qualify for Healthy Start – if you're over 16 and don't put it on your form, we won't be able to send you vouchers. So please make sure we have it!

I'm pregnant and under 18. Do I need to tell you about any benefits or tax credits that my family's getting?
If you're under 18 and applying for vouchers because you're pregnant, not because you already have a child, then you don't have to tell us about any benefits or tax credits you are getting. But it's good if you DO tell us if you are getting them, otherwise your vouchers will stop coming as soon as the baby is born.
What do I do about the National Insurance number if I’m under 16?

Leave the box blank. It won’t affect your application, but as soon as you get your number, call or write to us and tell us.

How do I claim the qualifying benefits or tax credits?

To claim tax credits you need to ring the tax credits helpline on 0845 300 3900.

To claim any of the other qualifying benefits, contact your local Jobcentre Plus or benefit office. Their phone number will be on all letters you’ve had from them, or in the phone book.

What do I do if my circumstances change once I’m getting vouchers?

Tell us – but make sure you tell the tax credits helpline or your local Jobcentre Plus or benefit office too. If you move home, it’s vital that you tell them straight away or your vouchers will keep going to your old address and we may not be able to replace them.

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Our contact details

Still have some questions or want another copy of the application form? Call Healthy Start: 0845 607 6823 (9am–5pm Monday to Friday),
textphone: 0845 601 7698

If you wish to order copies of this leaflet in bulk call: 0300 123 1002,
textphone: 0300 123 1003 or go online at www.orderline.dh.gov.uk

This leaflet is also available in alternative formats.

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