

Healthy Start Scheme

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be entitled to help to buy healthy food and milk. If you're eligible, you'll be sent a Healthy Start card with money on it that you can use in some UK shops (similar to a prepaid debit card). The card will be automatically topped up every four weeks with your payment.

Note, the Healthy Start scheme is not available in Scotland. Instead, you can get help from [Best Start Foods](#).

Who is eligible?

You'll qualify for the Healthy Start Scheme if you're at least 10 weeks pregnant or you have at least one child that's under 4.

In addition, you must be receiving one or more of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (which includes the child addition)
- Universal Credit (only if your family's take-home pay is £408 or less per month from employment).

You will also be eligible for Healthy Start if:

- You're under 18 and pregnant, even if you are not claiming any benefits
- You claim income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are over 10 weeks pregnant

How much will you get?

You'll get money added onto your card every 4 weeks to spend on certain food and milk. You'll get:

- £4.25 each week of your pregnancy from the 10th week
- £8.50 each week for children from birth to age one
- £4.25 each week for children between ages one and four

Your money will stop when your child is age four, or if you no longer receive benefits.

You can also use your card to get free vitamin supplements. These are tablets for women and drops for children.

How to apply

You can apply online at www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/.

To apply, you will need your:

- name
- address
- date of birth
- National Insurance number
- baby's due date (if you're pregnant)
- benefit award letter if you're over 18 (you must enter the same information that's on this letter).

If you require any further information on the financial support available for parents, please contact our Family Benefits Advice Service for free, confidential and impartial advice at fbas@employersforchildcare.org.