

What is Healthy Start?

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant or have a child under 4, you may be eligible for the Healthy Start scheme.

It's worth £34 a month for the first year of your baby's life and £17 a month between 1 and 4 years.

If you're on certain benefits – or if you're under 18 and pregnant – you'll get help towards your weekly shop for buying milk, some healthy foods and free Healthy Start vitamins.

Do I qualify?

You can get a Healthy Start card if you:

- are at least 10 weeks pregnant or
- have a child under four years old.

Your family must also get at least one of the following:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Child Tax Credit with a family income of £16,190 or less per year
- Pension Credit
- Universal Credit with no earned income or total earned income of £408 or less per month for the family. (To find this, look at your Universal Credit award notice in the section "your take home pay for this month".)

Families with No Recourse to Public Funds may also be able to apply. You should email healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk to talk to an advisor.

If you are under 18 and pregnant, you can get a Healthy Start card even if you don't get any of the above benefits.

How much will I get for my children?

The pre-paid card will be topped up every four weeks.

The amount of money that families receive depends on if they are pregnant or how old their children are.

- From 10 weeks onwards, you can get £4.25 for each week of your pregnancy
- £8.50 per week for each child aged under 1 year
- £4.25 per week for each child between 1 and 4 years old.

You can also get free Healthy Start vitamins.

There is no limit on the amount of children you can claim for.

The money will stop when your child is 4 years old or if you no longer receive benefits.

How do I apply?

There are different ways to apply for Healthy Start depending on what benefit awards you receive.

You can only apply online if;

- You get Universal Credit and you're at least 10 weeks pregnant or have at least one child under 4 years old
- You get Universal Credit and your family's monthly 'take-home pay for this period' is £408 or less from employment
- You get Child Tax Credit and you have at least one child under 4 years old
- You get Child Tax Credit and your family's annual income is £16,190 or less
- You do not get Working Tax Credit

You need to apply by email or phone if;

1. If you're at least 10 weeks pregnant, or have at least one child under 4 years old, and get either:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Pension Credit (which includes the child addition)
- Working Tax Credit run-on (paid for 4 weeks if your working hours, or your partner or carer's, go to less than 16 hours per week)

2. If you're at least 10 weeks pregnant and either:

- under 18 years old and not getting any benefits
- getting Child Tax Credits and your family's annual income is £16,190 or less
- getting income-related Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)

To apply for your care online visit www.HealthyStart.nhs.uk

You do not need a signature from a health professional on your application.

To apply, you'll need the following to hand:

- 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 make sure that the details you are entering are exactly how they appear on your benefits claim letter otherwise the system won't be able to find you and this might delay your application.

If you are still getting an unsuccessful application message, contact your benefit agency to check your details are correct, then try applying again.

How to apply by email or phone

- Email: start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk
- Or call: 0300 330 7010

Phone lines are open 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday (except public holidays). Please note that some mobile providers charge outside of free minutes for 0300 numbers, so please check before you call.

If you require support with your application please contact Jackie Wotton from Citizen's Advice Liverpool, jackie.wotton@caliverpool.org.uk or 0151 522 1400 ext 1316

What can I use the money on?

You can use the money on your Healthy Start card to pay for:

- fresh or frozen fruit and veg (whole or chopped, packaged or loose – with no added ingredients)
- fresh, dried, and tinned beans and pulses
- plain cow's milk (whole, semi-skimmed or skimmed)
- infant formula milk

You can also use your card to collect:

- Healthy Start Vitamins – these support you during pregnancy and breastfeeding
- Vitamin drops for babies and young children – these are suitable from birth to 4 years old.

Where can I use my Healthy Start card?

The Healthy Start pre-paid card can be used in any shop that sells healthy food and milk and accepts Mastercard.

This includes:

- Supermarkets
- your local shop
- pharmacies
- markets
- petrol stations
- Queen of Greens mobile greengrocer [Queen of Greens Bus Stop Map - Feeding Liverpool](#)
- The majority of the Community Food Spaces (food pantries, community shops, community markets) [Map - Feeding Liverpool](#)
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The Mastercard symbol is normally shown on the shop door or at the till. Ask an employee if you're unsure.

The card can't be used for online shopping or to request cashback.

You can check your balance in any cash machine using the PIN provided with your card, like a normal bank card, or by calling Healthy Start on 0300 330 7010.

How do I activate my card?

You'll receive your card by post.

It will come with your first payment loaded on it then money will be automatically added to your card every 4 weeks.

To activate your card before you can go shopping, you'll need to call 0300 330 2090

You'll need to have the following to hand when you make the call:

- Card
- Date of birth
- Client ID (located at the top of the letter that arrives with your card)

The first time you use your card in a store you'll need to insert your card and use your PIN number.

After that, you can make contactless payments of up to £45.

Where do I get my Healthy Start free vitamins?

Free vitamins are for pregnant and breastfeeding women and for children from birth to 4 years old.

Here in Liverpool, the main distribution point is via our Children's Centres.

Find your local Children's Centre here <https://liverpool.gov.uk/children-and-families/early-years-and-childcare/childrens-centres/>