

# Healthy Start Toolkit November 2023





Healthy Start is a UK wide NHS Scheme, providing women who are pregnant, or anyone with young children under 4 and on certain qualifying benefits, weekly funds to buy healthy foods and milk. The scheme also gives access to collect free vitamins, including vitamins for pregnant or breastfeeding women, as well as vitamins for children up to the age of 4.

Healthy Start recipients are provided with a pre-paid Healthy Start Mastercard to use to buy healthy foods and milk, this works just like a debit card, with a chip and pin and contactless feature that can be used on any card reader that accepts Mastercard payments.

## How much do you get?

£4.25 each week from 10<sup>th</sup> week of pregnancy

£8.50 each week for children from birth to 1 year old

£4.25 each week for children from 1 – 4 years old

## What can you buy with your Healthy Start funds?

### Fruit & Vegetables



Fresh, Frozen or Tinned



Whole or Chopped

Packaged or Loose



Fruit in fruit juice

Fruit/vegetables in water

Fresh, Dried or Tinned pulses



### Infant Formula

Stage one only (first infant formula)

Made from cow's milk

Nutritionally complete



## Who is eligible for Healthy Start?



**Pregnant women or families** who have a child **under four years old** and receive one or more of the following:

- ✓ Income Support
- ✓ Jobseeker's Allowance
- ✓ Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- ✓ Child Tax Credit (only if your family's annual income is £16,190 or less)
- ✓ Pension Credit
- ✓ Universal Credit (only if your family's take home pay from employment is £408 per month or less)



Pregnant women under the age of 18 are also eligible, even if they do not receive any of the above benefits.



Families with no recourse to public funds should email [Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk](mailto:Healthystartclaim@dhsc.gov.uk) to discuss their claim.



Details about eligibility on the [Healthy Start website](#)



**\*As a retailer you can accept Healthy Start Cards if you can accept Mastercard card payments and sell any of the Healthy Start eligible items\***



## You must sell one of the following:

### Fruit, vegetables, and pulses (with no added ingredients)

- Fresh, frozen, or tinned
- Whole, chopped, packaged or loose.
- Fruit in fruit juice, or fruit or vegetables in water

### Plain cow's milk

- Pasteurised, sterilised, long-life or ultra-heat treated (UHT)

### Infant formula made from cow's milk.

- Stage one only (first infant formula)
- Nutritionally complete
- Does not include follow-on formula or milk ('from 6 months', or 'from 6 to 12 months').

## Key information/top tips for retailers

- ✗ You **no longer** need to sign up to be able to accept a Healthy Start Card
- ✗ It does **not** incur **any cost** to yourselves as a retailer to accept Healthy Start Cards.
- ✓ You **do not** need to check if the person is using their card correctly (i.e., for the right items). This is **not your responsibility**; this is the responsibility of the person using the Healthy Start Card.
- ✓ There are **free resources** online for Retailer's to use to **advertise** that you accept the Healthy Start Card.
- ✓ Accepting and promoting the Healthy Start Card is likely to **increase footfall** into your store.
- ✓ Nottinghamshire County Council have created local **promotional materials** for businesses to use to **promote** the scheme **to customers**.



## Resources for retailers

- **Business cards** for retailers to advertise that customers can use their Healthy Start Card there. If you want some of these cards to display within your business, contact: [rosie.cunningham@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.cunningham@nottsc.gov.uk)
- Healthy Start **Printed leaflets** are available on request. If you'd like some, please contact: [rosie.cunningham@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.cunningham@nottsc.gov.uk)

**What can I buy?**

**Fruit and vegetables**

✓ They can be:

- fresh, frozen or tinned
- whole or chopped
- packaged or loose
- fruit in fruit juice
- fruit, vegetables in water
- fresh, dried or tinned pulses

✗ They cannot:

- have added ingredients like fat (oil), salt, sugar or flavourings
- be juiced or pre-cooked
- be fruits in syrup
- be smoothies

**Plain cow's milk**

✓ This needs to be plain cow's milk, which is pasteurised, sterilised, long-life or ultra-heat treated (UHT).

✗ It cannot be:

- flavoured
- coloured
- evaporated
- condensed
- plant-based milk
- powdered (unless it's stage one infant formula)

**Infant formula**

✓ Stage one only (first infant formula)

- made from cow's milk
- nutritionally complete.

✗ It cannot be:

- follow-on formula or milk ('from 6 months', or 'from 6 to 12 months').

**Healthy Start Vitamins**

You can use your Healthy Start prepaid card to show proof of eligibility to collect Healthy Start vitamins.

Find your nearest vitamin provider on the Healthy Start website.

Take your prepaid card with you when you collect them.

For more information and to apply to the NHS Healthy Start scheme, visit: [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

Or call us on **0300 330 7010**  
Our contact centre is open Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm (except public holidays)

Follow us on Facebook and Twitter @NHSHealthyStart

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**NHS**  
**Healthy Start**  
Get help to buy food and milk

- The retailer's section on the **NHS Healthy Start Resources Page** has a range of **free resources** for you to use, including **email banners, digital screens, posters, social media assets, animations, leaflets, and stickers**. Please note these are 'print at home (yourself)' materials. You can find these resources via the following link: <https://media.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/resources/f/nhs-healthy-start-scheme/retailers>
- There's additional **resources and information** about the scheme, including a Healthy Start **eligibility calculator** on the Notts Help Yourself Page via the following link: <https://form.typeform.com/to/WE0ncrBs?typeform-source=foodfoundation.typeform.com>



## Top tips for promoting Healthy Start

Activity number	Promotional activity	Additional detail/explanation	Completed?
1.	Tell people about the scheme at every opportunity	Even if you think a person isn't eligible, they might be, or they might tell someone who is!	
2.	Check caseloads monthly, looking for families with children aged 0-4years and provide all of them with general Healthy Start Information	Applicable if working with people regularly, in health care or social care for example	
3.	Always encourage and support families to apply for Healthy Start. If people need extra help in completing the application, please help them to do so	This can include helping them through the application form itself or giving them a tech device to enable them to apply online	
4.	If a family are unsure if they're eligible, please don't leave the conversation there. Either go through the criteria with them and help them to figure out if they're eligible, or signpost them to use the Healthy Start eligibility calculator	Use this online eligibility calculator to help: <a href="https://form.typeform.com/to/WE0ncrBs?typeform-source=foodfoundation.typeform.com">https://form.typeform.com/to/WE0ncrBs?typeform-source=foodfoundation.typeform.com</a>	
5.	Always include Healthy Start information, things like posters/leaflets/articles in any resources you give out to families	See page for printable versions, or contact for pre-printed	
6.	Always include Healthy Start as a question in any signposting checklists, resource booklets, and assessments for families	For example: Do you know about the Healthy Start Scheme, and would you like more information?	
7.	Always include a Healthy Start article in any newsletters going out to the public or families	See pages 13 & 14 for both a full version and short version pre-written article and picture ready for you to use.	



8.	Promote the Healthy Start scheme online via all of your communications channels, including your website, partner websites if relevant and all social media platforms	See pages 7 – 11 for guidance on promoting Healthy Start on social media, including pre-written posts and pictures.	
9.	Display Healthy Start promotional materials around your setting and work offices, both for families visiting and as a reminder of the scheme to colleagues.	You can print these materials yourselves, or request physical copies from: <a href="mailto:rosie.cunningham@nottsc.gov.uk">rosie.cunningham@nottsc.gov.uk</a>	
10.	Actively make colleagues and partners aware of the Healthy Start scheme at every opportunity. Teach colleagues the basic knowledge of the scheme, so they're able to confidently inform and support families they encounter		
11.	Take the quiz on page x to test yours and your colleague's knowledge on the scheme.	This can be used as a training tool and to highlight any areas you need to improve your knowledge on.	









## Promoting the Healthy Start Scheme online.




This section will provide a practical guide to promoting Healthy Start, including a pre-written article that can be used as a paragraph in newsletters, on websites and blogs. There are also pre-written social media posts, which you can simply copy and paste and then post on your own social media channels. Suggested images to go alongside the articles and posts are also included, these images can also be ‘copy and pasted’ or downloaded from the Healthy Start website – relevant links to each image included.

It is recommended that with each social media post, you always use a Hashtag that includes relevant keywords, such as: #HealthyStart #HealthyStartNotts #NHSHealthyStart. It is also a good idea to tag relevant partners/stakeholders in your posts (if they have social media channels), so they can interact with the content you’ve posted, increasing it’s reach and visibility massively. For example, for those in Nottinghamshire, you can tag Nottinghamshire County Council, your local district Council, the Families Information Service, and the NHS Healthy Start Scheme itself. You can tag as many relevant people/organisations in your posts as you like, there can’t be too many, the more hashtags, the more visibility.

Category and type of Social Media Post	Pre-written Post	Suitable images for post	
<p><b>General details about the Healthy Start Scheme.</b>  <b>Suitable for all social media platforms.</b></p>	<p>Healthy Start helps your children have a great start in life, with help towards the cost of fresh fruit, vegetables, and milk. Make it easy to shop healthy, with our new prepaid Healthy Start card. Apply online today:  <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a>                      #HealthyStartNottinghamshire#beststartnotts                      #NHSHealthyStart</p>	 <p><a href="http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>‘Benefits of digital scheme (6)’</p>	 <p><a href="http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>‘Benefits of digital scheme (3)’</p>

<p><b>What you can buy with Healthy Start Scheme card Suitable for all social media platforms.</b></p>	<p>Healthy Start helps your children have a great start in life, with help towards the cost of fresh fruit, vegetables, and milk. Make it easy to shop healthy, with our new prepaid Healthy Start card. Apply online today:  <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a>                  #HealthyStartNottinghamshire#NHSHealthyStart                  #beststartnotts</p>	 <p><b>We can help you buy fresh, frozen or tinned vegetables</b></p> <p>Apply for your prepaid Healthy Start card now at:  <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p> <p><a href="#">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>What you can buy (3)</p>	 <p><b>We can help you buy fresh, frozen and tinned healthy essentials</b></p> <p>To see if you're eligible for Healthy Start visit:  <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p> <p><a href="#">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>What you can buy (7)</p>
<p><b>What you get as part of the Healthy Start Scheme (Advertises all, fruit, veg, milk, pulses &amp; vitamins)</b></p>	<p>With the @NHSHealthyStart scheme, you could be entitled to weekly support towards:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vegetables (carrot emoji)</li> <li>Fruit (apple emoji)</li> <li>Milk (glass of milk emoji)</li> <li>Infant Formula Milk (milk bottle emoji)</li> </ul>	 <p><b>We can help you buy fresh, frozen or tinned fruit</b></p> <p>Apply for your prepaid Healthy Start card now at:  <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p> <p><a href="#">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>What you can buy (4)</p>	

	<p>Pulses (can emoji) Healthy Start Vitamins (vitamins emoji)</p> <p>Could you be eligible? Find out and apply today: <a href="https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/">https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/</a> #HealthyStartNottinghamshire#NHSHealthyStart #beststartnotts</p>	 <p><b>NHS</b> You can get help to buy, Fruit and Veg, Milk and Pulses, Formula Milk and Vitamins</p> <p>Apply for your prepaid Healthy Start card now at: <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p>	 <p><b>NHS</b> We can help you buy fresh, frozen and tinned healthy essentials</p> <p>To see if you're eligible for Healthy Start visit: <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p>	
<p><b>What you get as part of the Healthy Start scheme – vitamins specific post</b></p>	<p>Did you know you can get free Healthy Start vitamins when you join the @NHSHealthyStart scheme? All you need to do is show your card when you collect your vitamins! Find your nearest here: <a href="https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/getting-vitamins/">https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/getting-vitamins/</a> #HealthyStartNottinghamshire#NHSHealthyStart# #HealthyStartVitamins#beststartnotts</p> <p>Can collect in some children’s Centres in Nottinghamshire – include link.</p>	 <p><b>NHS</b> We can help you get free Healthy Start vitamins</p> <p>To check if you're eligible for Healthy Start visit: <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p>	<p><a href="http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>What you can buy (5)</p>	<p><a href="http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>What you can buy (7)</p>
		<p><a href="http://nhsbsa.nhs.uk">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>What you can buy (1)</p>		

<p><b>Important health benefits of the scheme – health promotion messaging</b></p>	<p>Fruit and vegetables are part of a healthy, balanced diet and can help your family stay healthy. If you're pregnant, or have a child under the age of 4, you could be eligible to help towards the cost of healthy essentials. Find out more by visiting:  <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a>  #HealthyStartNottinghamshire#NHSHealthyStart#  #HealthyStartFruit&amp;Vegetables#beststartnotts</p> <p>The @NHSHealthyStart Scheme can help give your children a great start in life. A healthy diet is crucial to keeping your family healthy. Fruit and vegetables are a great source of vitamins and minerals for you and your family. Find out more by visiting:  <a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a>  #HealthyStartNottinghamshire#NHSHealthyStart  #Healthyfruitandvegetables#beststartnotts</p>	 <p><a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/news/business-services">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>Health Messaging</p>	 <p><a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/news/business-services">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>Health Messaging (4)</p>
		 <p><a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/news/business-services">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>Health Messaging (3)</p>	 <p><a href="http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk">www.healthystart.nhs.uk</a></p> <p><a href="https://www.nhs.uk/news/business-services">NHS Business Services News (nhsbsa.nhs.uk)</a></p> <p>Health Messaging (5)</p>

**Eligibility posts -  
could you be eligible?  
Check your eligibility**

Could you be eligible for support in providing a Healthy Start for your family? If you're pregnant or have a child under the age of 4, you could be entitled to receive a pre-paid card to support with the cost of healthy essentials. Use the eligibility calculator to find out today if you're eligible for the Healthy Start Scheme: [Healthy Start Eligibility Calculator](#) #HealthyStartNottinghamshire#NHSHealthyStart #beststartnotts



[NHS Business Services News \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](#)

Eligibility criteria (5)



[NHS Business Services News \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](#)

Eligibility criteria (6)



[NHS Business Services News \(nhsbsa.nhs.uk\)](#)

Eligibility criteria (7)

## Pre-written newsletter article (full version)

### Are you pregnant or have children under 4? Don't miss out on free healthy food, from the Healthy Start Scheme

This is a reminder about the UK Wide NHS Healthy Start Scheme. Please share this information with families in your settings in case they are eligible. As of July 2023, there were 2346 eligible people in Nottinghamshire **not** claiming Healthy Start, that equates to just under £10,000\* unclaimed monies every year (\*based on receiving £4.25 weekly). With the increased cost of living pressures, the scheme can support families to stay healthy.

If you're more than 10 weeks pregnant, or have a child under 4, and receive one or more of the qualifying benefits\*\*, you may be entitled to receive money to help you buy healthy foods and milk. Don't forget, you can also use your Healthy Start Card to collect free vitamins! \*\*\* Those on the scheme receive £4.25 for each week of pregnancy from the 10<sup>th</sup> week onwards, this doubles to £8.50 a week for children from birth to 1 year old and from 1 to 4 years old you again receive £4.25 weekly (these amounts are per child).

Since the scheme went digital in 2022, it is easier than ever to use healthy start funds. Those who are eligible will receive a Prepaid Healthy Start Card, this looks and works like a debit card, with a chip and pin and contactless feature. Simply choose healthy start items and use the healthy start card in the card reader to purchase at checkout. The card can be used in almost all shops that stock healthy start items and accept Mastercard payments, including, all major supermarkets, local shops, newsagents, pharmacies, petrol station shops, markets and more!

It takes just two minutes to find out if your eligible using the Healthy Start Calculator <https://form.typeform.com/to/WE0ncrBs?typeform-source=foodfoundation.typeform.com>

You can apply for your Healthy Start card here: [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)

*\*\*Qualifying Benefits: Income Support, Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support Allowance, Child Tax Credit (only if family annual income is £16,190 or less), Pension Credit, Universal Credit (only if family's take home pay from employment is £408 or less per month).*

*\*\*\* You can get Healthy Start Vitamins to support during pregnancy and breastfeeding. You can also get vitamin drops for babies and young children suitable from birth to 4 years old.*



**Are you pregnant or have children under the age of 4?**  
You could get **£221\*** per year with the NHS Healthy Start scheme

Check if you're eligible and apply online at: [www.healthystart.nhs.uk](http://www.healthystart.nhs.uk)   @NHSHealthyStart

\*Based on £4.25 per week eligibility



## Pre-written newsletter/blog article (short version)

This is intended to be a short approx. 150 words paragraph to make people aware of the Healthy Start scheme. A paragraph this size can be inserted straight into newsletters, leaflets, bulletins etc:

*This is a reminder about the UK Wide NHS Healthy Start Scheme. People across Nottinghamshire are missing out on money from the scheme to help them buy healthy foods and milk. Most recent data showed 2346 eligible people in Nottinghamshire were NOT claiming Healthy Start. This is nearly £10,000 in unclaimed monies a year. Please signpost families in your settings to further information in the attached leaflet as they may be eligible to claim and get help to keep their families healthy!*



## Healthy Start Business Cards

The image below is of a Healthy Start business card designed by NCC in collaboration with the national NHS Scheme. These can be put on display in places that accept Healthy Start Cards. They are designed to be business card size for ease of display and so they don't take up too much room particularly in small venues and at checkouts etc. These can also be used at food support schemes who accept Healthy Start, for example they could be placed in food bags/food parcels to advertise the scheme. If you want some Healthy Start business cards for a venue in Nottinghamshire, these can be provided free of charge, to request please contact: [rosie.cunningham@nottsc.gov.uk](mailto:rosie.cunningham@nottsc.gov.uk)





## Healthy Start Quiz



### Question 1:

Pregnant women and those families with children under what age may qualify for Healthy Start (if in receipt of qualifying benefits)?

- A) 3 years old
- B) 4 years old
- C) 5 years old

### Question 2:

Which of the following would not be eligible for purchase using Healthy Start funds?

- A) Tinned mandarins/oranges
- B) Frozen peas
- C) Soya milk

### Question 3:

If someone in receipt of Healthy Start wants to use their Healthy Start Card for the first time, which of the following must they do? Tick all that apply.

- A) Activate their card.
- B) When using the card for the first time you must make a purchase using the contactless feature
- C) Spend all the funds available on the card in one transaction.

### Question 4:

The Healthy Start card can be used in most shops, if they accept Mastercard Payments and what?

- A) Stock all Healthy Start eligible items.
- B) Stock at least one Healthy Start eligible item.
- C) Stock fresh fruit and vegetables

### Question 5:

In Nottinghamshire, where can Healthy Start Vitamins be collected from?

- A) Any shop that accepts the Healthy Start Scheme
- B) Any Chemist
- C) Children's Centre Services



# Healthy Start Quiz Answers



**Question 1:**

**B - Children under the age of 4 years old**

**Question 2:**

**C - Soya Milk**

**Question 3:**

**A - Activate their card.**

**Question 4:**

**B - Stock at least one Healthy Start eligible item.**

**Question 5:**

**C - Children's Centre Services**

