



NHS Healthy Start Scheme is changing

A guide for retailers

About Healthy Start

Healthy Start is a government scheme for those who are at least 10 weeks pregnant, parents, carers and young children in low-income families, to help them buy healthy food and milk and get free Healthy Start vitamins.

This guide contains information and advice about the new digital service. It explains:

- Changes to the Healthy Start scheme for retailers
- The prepaid card
- In store customer service
- In store promotion



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What is NHS Healthy Start?

The NHS Healthy Start scheme aims to help those who are pregnant or have responsibility for at least one child under the age of 4, who are on a qualifying benefit and a low income in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Scotland have their own scheme called Best Start Foods scheme.

The digital Healthy Start service will offer an online application process and introduce a prepaid card to be used for purchasing healthy food and milk, to replace the paper vouchers.

Beneficiaries of the scheme can also use their prepaid card to collect free Healthy Start vitamins.

Those who are entitled, will receive a prepaid card, branded with the NHS Healthy Start graphics that can be used in any store which displays the Mastercard® acceptance mark. The cards are regularly topped up with their benefit.

NHS Healthy Start beneficiaries can buy:

- plain liquid cow's milk, including long-life, pasteurised or ultra heat treated (UHT) varieties of milk, but not milk to or from which chemicals, vitamins, flavours or colours have been 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 branded vitamins, from their local distributors:

- Multi-vitamins (for those who are pregnant or breastfeeding)
- Vitamin drops for children aged 6 months to 4 years old



Key changes to the scheme

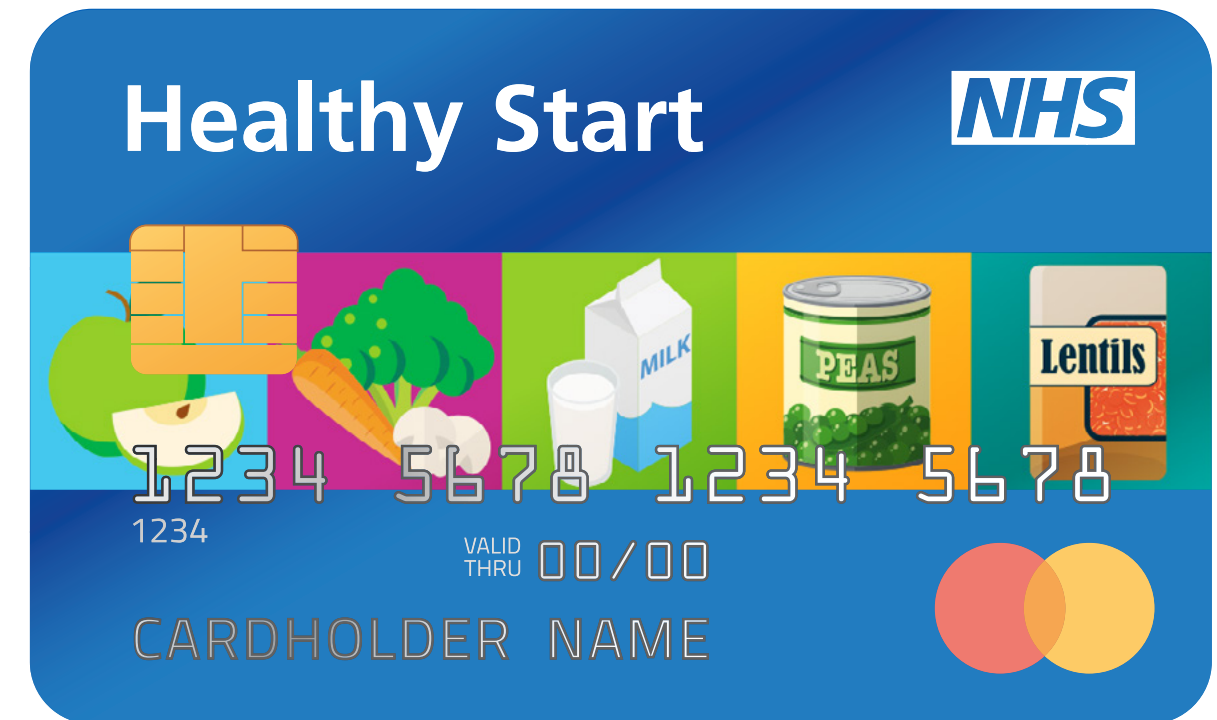
- ✓ **Online application**
There will be no paper application forms required. All applications will be made online or by the assisted telephone application route
- ✓ **Prepaid card**
Paper vouchers will no longer be sent. Beneficiaries will receive a prepaid card which will be topped up with their benefit every 4 weeks
- ✓ **Collecting Healthy Start vitamins**
Beneficiaries of the NHS Healthy Start scheme will be able to show their prepaid card as proof of entitlement to get free Healthy Start vitamins

- ✓ **Retailer registration**
Retailers will no longer be required to register to accept Healthy Start vouchers or be part of the Healthy Start scheme. A beneficiary can use their prepaid card in most retailers that sells the eligible healthy start food and milk items which displays the Mastercard® acceptance mark
- ✓ **Retailer reimbursement**
Retailers will no longer need to request reimbursement from the Healthy Start Reimbursement Unit. Retailers who are registered to the scheme should continue to collect and redeem valid Healthy Start vouchers until their expiry date
- ✓ **Promotional materials**
When the digital service launches, new communications and marketing materials including toolkits will be made available to help promote the scheme and share on your channels



The prepaid card

- The card provided to beneficiaries is a prepaid Mastercard®.
- The prepaid card can accept refunds for purchases that were originally made using the same prepaid card.
- The card is chip and pin and has contactless features.
- Online transactions are currently disabled.
- The card is restricted to specific Merchant Category Codes (MCC). If you find NHS Healthy Start cards being declined all of the time it may be that the MCC code in your store is not on the approved list.
- Retailers are no longer required to register to the NHS Healthy Start scheme and beneficiaries will no longer be required to identify themselves to a retailer as an NHS Healthy Start recipient.
- A beneficiary may check the balance on their card at an ATM or by calling **0300 330 7010**
- A retailer is also not required to check a beneficiary's purchases. The card does not restrict types of purchases in store and the responsibility for buying the right items is fully on the cardholder.
- If a beneficiary loses their card or it is stolen, they may request a new prepaid card by contacting the helpline. They will be sent a new card in the post within 7 working days. If you are in possession of a lost card then you can contact us on **0300 330 7010** to find out what to do.



Promotion and Campaigning



Access to promotional materials

There will be a range of promotional materials available to download and use on your channels at: <https://media.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/>

These materials will include, but is not limited to:

- Social media toolkit, content and graphics
- Editable posters
- Videos and animations
- Leaflets including Easy-Read
- Digital GP screen designs
- Banner designs
- Guidance documents
- Welsh language materials

Modifying the communications materials

There will be some communications materials available which will have a clear space for organisations to add their logos and other information. The NHS logo must not be removed from any of the materials and should be placed to the top right. The supporting organisations logo should be placed along the bottom of the page. The visual style should follow the NHS Identity guidelines. If a supporting organisation logo is added to materials, you must ensure the NHS logo is also included.

Creating your own NHS Healthy Start promotional materials

All non-NHS organisations must have any promotional materials approved by the NHSBSA before distributing.

The letters 'NHS' and the NHS logo are protected by law. They are UK trademarks owned by the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and may not be produced without permission.

If you can not use the materials provided and wish to create your own, please contact the NHSBSA communications and marketing team at: nhsbsa.communicationsteam@nhs.net

Social media

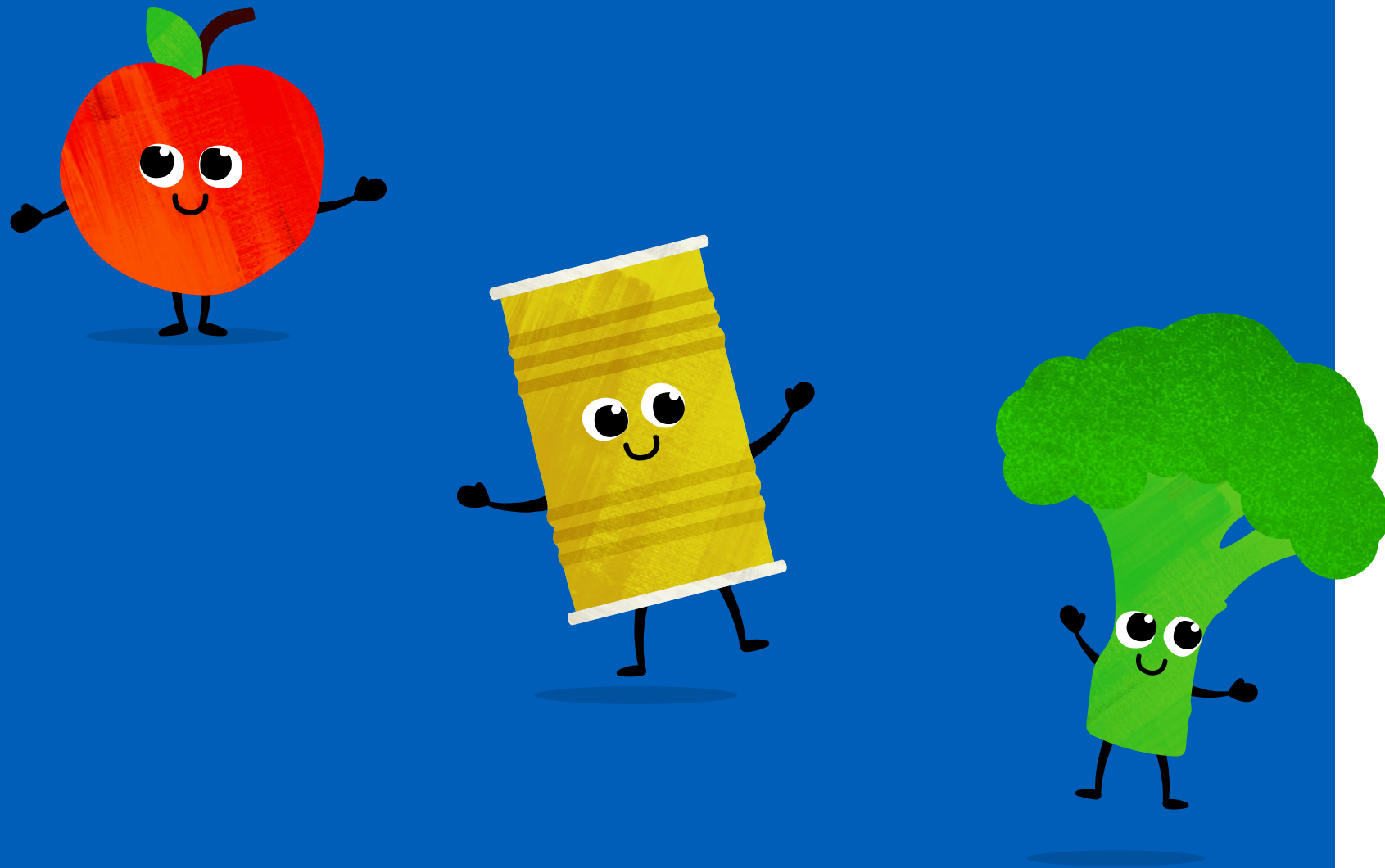
There are two NHS Healthy Start scheme social media accounts, Facebook and Twitter. These are verified accounts and will be a source of information for beneficiaries and stakeholders to be updated about the NHS Healthy Start scheme.

There will be regular posts and social media activities on both channels which we encourage all supporting organisations to share on their own social media channels.

Follow us by searching **@NHSHealthyStart**

NHS Healthy Start customer service

There may be occasions that customers may have queries about the NHS Healthy Start scheme at your customer service points. There is a list of FAQs that may help to provide this information to your customers.



How can someone apply for the NHS Healthy Start scheme?



Anyone who is eligible for the NHS Healthy Start scheme may apply online to join the scheme. If they are not able to access the online application at www.healthystart.nhs.uk, they may contact our customer contact centre on **0300 330 7010** to apply over the phone.

How can someone purchase healthy foods with the prepaid card?

Your retail store will need to have the Mastercard® acceptance mark and a card payment facility allowing chip and pin, or contactless payments to enable a customer to use their NHS Healthy Start prepaid card.

What can they purchase with their Healthy Start prepaid card?

- plain cow's milk – whole, semi-skimmed or skimmed. It can be pasteurised, sterilised long-life or UHT.
- 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.

Does the retailer need to check what items customers are buying with their prepaid card?

The responsibility to purchase healthy food items at a retail store belongs to the customer. Retailers are not expected to monitor items that are being purchased with the NHS Healthy Start prepaid card.

Important contacts

Visit our website: www.healthystart.nhs.uk

Contact us by telephone: **0300 330 7010***

Customer service email address: healthy.start@nhsbsa.nhs.uk

To contact the NHS Healthy Start team: nhsbsa.healthystartdigital@nhs.net

For any media enquiries: nhsbsa.communicationsteam@nhs.net

Follow us on social media: www.facebook.com/nhshealthystart & www.twitter.com/nhshealthystart



* Calls to 0300 numbers are charged at the same rate as dialling an 01 or 02 number. If your landline or mobile service has inclusive minutes to 01 / 02 numbers, then calls to 0300 are counted as part of this inclusive call volume

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