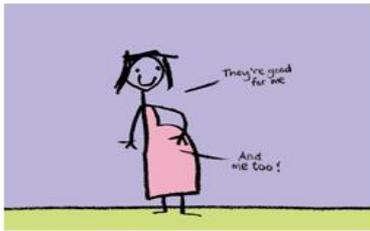


HEALTHY START VITAMIN SCHEME



HEALTHY START



A healthy diet during pregnancy is important for both the mother and the development and growth of the unborn baby. Good nutrition during pregnancy and in early childhood helps prepare for healthy adulthood and can reduce the risk of obesity, heart disease and some cancers.

What is 'Healthy Start'?

'Healthy Start' is a statutory government programme which replaced the previous welfare food scheme and is designed to provide financial help to improve nutrition for families receiving certain benefits and mothers under 18 years of age. Qualifying pregnant women and families with young children are provided with vouchers which can be used to buy milk, fresh fruit and vegetables and infant formula. The scheme also includes free vitamins.

What are the vitamins?

The supplements contain the exact level of vitamins as recommended by the Department of Health. During pregnancy you need certain vitamins such as folic acid and vitamin D. Very few foods contain vitamin D – this is why sunshine is important because you make vitamin D in your skin when you are outside in the sun. Folic acid is also very important before and during early pregnancy. All women who are planning to get pregnant should take a supplement of folic acid as it hard to get enough from food. Children from 6 months up until their 4th birthday are given vitamins which contain vitamins A, C and D. This is important as children may not be getting enough vitamins from their food, particularly if they are picky or fussy eaters.

Why are vitamins important?

- **Vitamin A:** helps with growth, eyesight and healthy skin, and also helps to strengthen the immune system.
- **Vitamin C:** helps the body to absorb iron and helps to maintain a healthy immune system.
- **Vitamin D:** is important for all pregnant and breastfeeding mums and is needed for the absorption of calcium from the diet for strong bones and teeth for mothers and babies. Adequate vitamin D supply in both mother and baby will help prevent the development of rickets in children.
- **Folic acid:** can help prevent birth defects, known as neural tube defects, such a spina bifida. Folic acid is also important for cell formation, especially red blood cells.

Chobham, Bisley and West End Children's Centre are offering the

Healthy Start Vitamins and drops.

Please pop into see us Monday – Thursday (9am – 3.30pm) or give us a call on more information.

We also accept the healthy start vouchers as payment.