

healthy habits for baby and you

tips and helpful advice for a
healthy, happy baby



Good
for you

and baby
too



a healthy baby starts with a healthy pregnancy

Congratulations! Pregnancy is such an exciting time, but it can sometimes feel a bit overwhelming. There's so much information to take in, and everyone seems to have an opinion on what you should or shouldn't be doing!

We're not here to tell you what to do, or how to do it. But we can help you pick up the healthy habits that can help you have a healthy, happy baby and become a healthy, happy family.

You'll probably have a lot of questions... that's absolutely natural. Why not write them down in this book so you're ready next time you see your midwife, health visitor or doctor?

Your name:

Your due date:

Your midwife's name and number:

.....



Mmmm!

baby can tell when mum eats well

why eating healthily is so important for your baby's development

It's always a good idea to eat healthily. But now you're pregnant, it matters more than ever. To develop fully, your baby's brain and organs need nutrients every single day. And that means choosing healthy foods over fatty, sugary ones. There are some foods that you need to avoid completely, like raw or partially cooked eggs, some fish and certain meats. For the facts on eating carefully when you're pregnant, go to [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk) and search for 'foods to avoid in pregnancy'.

You're bound to put on some weight while you're pregnant due to your baby growing. Putting on too much weight, however, can affect your health and increase your blood pressure. You shouldn't try and diet; just eat healthily and try to stay active.

Being a healthy weight means that it is easier for you to move around in labour and reduces the chance of needing more medical help.

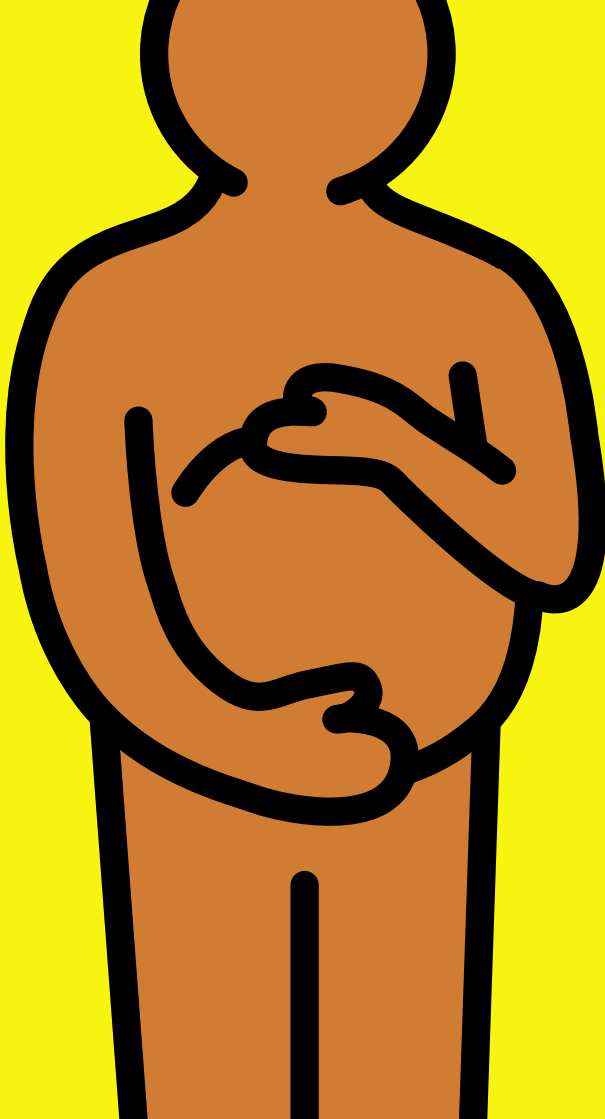
top tip

Feeling extra peckish? A snack is fine, just steer clear of crisps, sweets and chocolates, which are high in fat and sugar. Try some fruit, a calcium-packed low-fat yoghurt or even beans on toast next time you need a snack-fix. You'll feel fuller for longer and less tempted to reach for junk food.

myth buster

“should I eat for two?”

In the past, mums were told to eat for themselves AND their babies. But now we know that's not true. In fact, it's only in the last three months of your pregnancy that you need to eat a little bit more; but we're only talking an extra 200 calories a day. That's the same as two slices of wholegrain toast and margarine.



**What shall
we eat, Mum?**

tasty meals you'll both love

Filling up on healthy food doesn't have to be hard work. It's just about making smart choices for you and your baby.

To start you off, here are some quick and easy meal ideas to see you through the day. Packed with nutrients and vitamins, they're good for you, and baby too.

breakfast Serves 4 adults very berry porridge



Porridge oats are cheap, fill you up and are much healthier than sugar-coated cereals. This tasty fruity version is a great way to start your day!

ingredients:

- 150g porridge oats
- 900ml cold water
- 8 tbsp low-fat natural yoghurt
- 100g frozen summer berries or forest fruits, defrosted



what to do:

1. Put the porridge oats and water into a non-stick saucepan. Heat and stir until boiling, then lower the heat and simmer gently, stirring often, for 5 minutes.
2. Spoon the porridge into serving bowls and top each portion with 2 tablespoons of yoghurt. Add the berries and serve.

tip: Lots of breakfast cereals are fortified with extra vitamins and minerals, so they're an easy way to add vitamins and minerals to your diet. Just make sure you go for the ones with less sugar and salt. A splash of semi-skimmed, skimmed or 1% fat milk is a good supply of calcium, too.

lunch

Serves 4 adults

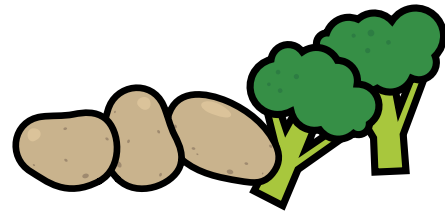
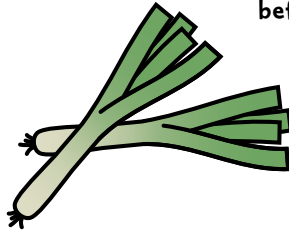
super veggie soup



This hearty soup is packed with vegetables, vitamins and minerals. Broccoli is full of iron and folate, which is especially good for you both.

ingredients:

- 2 leeks, washed and sliced
- 250g broccoli, broken into florets
- 250g potatoes, peeled and chopped
- 600ml reduced salt vegetable or chicken stock
- 100g spinach, washed
- 300ml 1% fat milk
- 1 pinch ground black pepper



what to do:

1. Put the leeks, broccoli and potatoes into a large saucepan and add the stock.
2. Heat until just boiling, and then turn the heat down low. Cook with the lid on for 15-20 minutes, or until the potatoes are tender.
3. Add the spinach and cook gently for another 2-3 minutes, until the leaves wilt down.
4. Blend the soup to a puree using a handheld stick blender, or pop it in a food processor or blender and whizz until smooth. Add the milk and reheat gently, seasoning with ground black pepper before serving.

tip: Any left over? Cool it, cover it and pop it in the fridge for up to 3 days. Just heat it up thoroughly before serving.

evening meal Serves 4 adults

fabulous fish pie



Warm and comforting, this fishy dish is a good source of protein. It counts towards your recommended two portions of fish a week, too.

ingredients:

700g potatoes, peeled and diced

425ml 1% fat milk

25g low-fat spread

25g plain flour

2 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

100g frozen peas

1 pinch ground black pepper

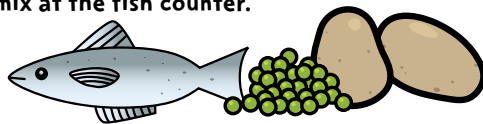
300g coley fillet, thawed if frozen,
skinned and cut into chunks

25g reduced fat mature Cheddar cheese, grated

what to do:

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C, fan 180°C, gas mark 6.
2. Boil the potatoes for 15-20 minutes until tender, then drain them and mash with 2 tbsp of the milk.
3. Put the remaining milk, low-fat spread and flour into a saucepan and bring to the boil over a medium heat. Stir it all the time with a small whisk or wooden spoon until the sauce bubbles and thickens. Stir in the parsley, add the peas and season with pepper.
4. Place the chunks of fish in an ovenproof dish, pour the sauce over, then top with mashed potato. Sprinkle the cheese all over the surface.
5. Bake in the middle of the oven for 25-30 minutes, until the top is golden brown. Serve with steamed or boiled broccoli.

tip: Cod, haddock or salmon are great in this pie, too. And look out for a handy (and budget friendly) fish pie mix at the fish counter.





I feel good!

this bump is made for walking

just 30 minutes of activity each day is good for you and your growing baby too

All adults need to be active for 150 minutes a week and this includes pregnant women. Just 30 minutes of walking a day can help keep you and your baby healthy.

Staying fit also helps you keep your energy levels up in the day, and makes it easier to sleep at night. Walking 30 minutes a day (it doesn't have to be all in one go) also helps prepare your body for labour, reduce swollen hands and feet and avoid varicose veins. It can even make it easier to get your figure back after the birth. So let's get moving!

top tip

Ankles and feet can often swell in pregnancy. Ease the puffiness and improve your blood circulation with these easy exercises. You can do them sitting or standing:

- Quickly bend and stretch your foot up and down 30 times
- Circle your foot 8 times in one direction, then 8 times in the other
- Repeat with the other foot

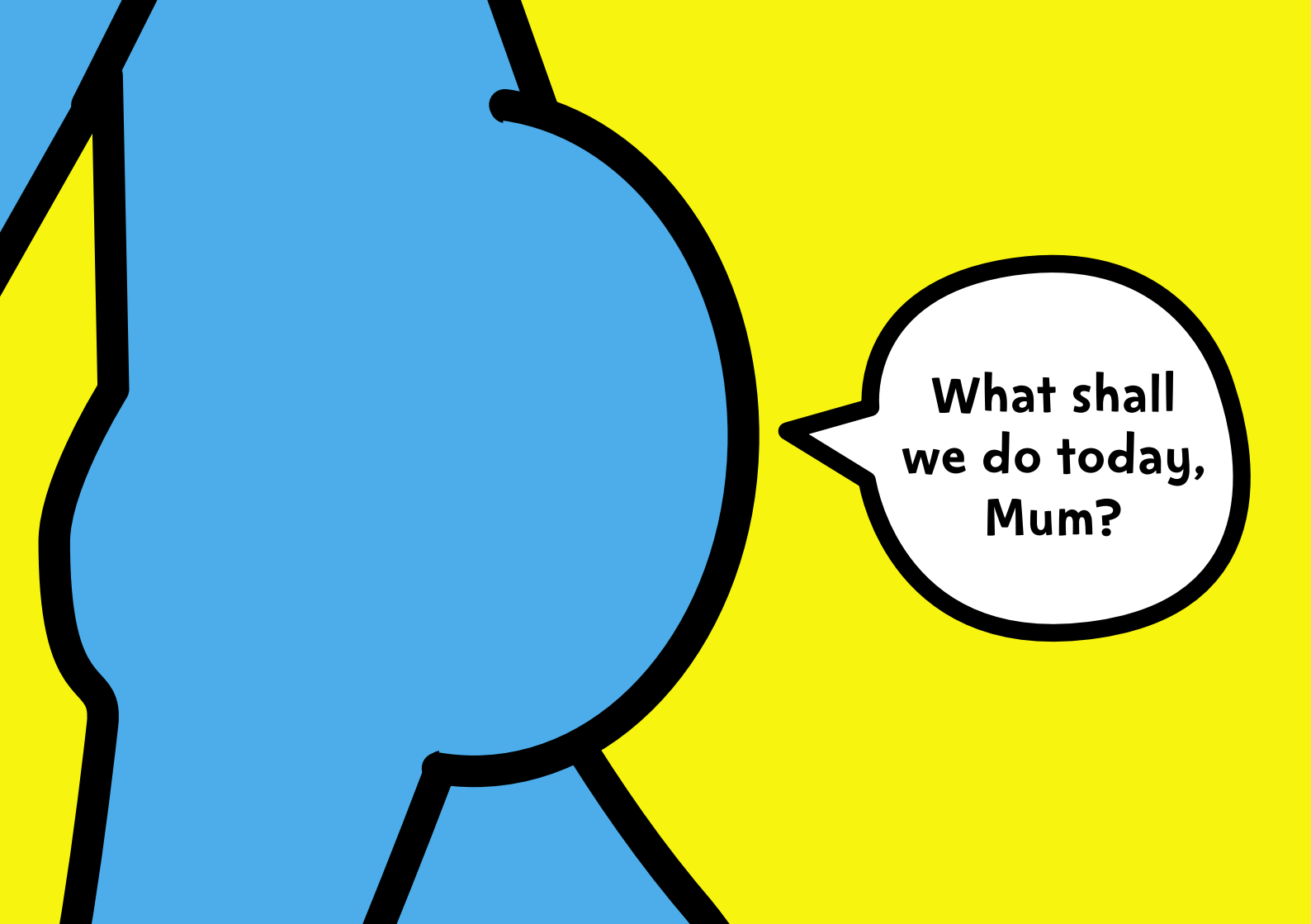
If you continue to have swollen ankles and feet, or have swollen ankles and feet along with headaches or blurred vision, you should see your midwife straightaway as these can be signs of pre eclampsia.

You can find more tips on staying active, including pelvic floor exercises, by searching 'exercise in pregnancy' at [nhs.uk](https://www.nhs.uk)

myth buster

“shouldn't I put my feet up?”

Being active won't put your baby at risk; in fact, it's really good for you both. Yes, it's ok to relax every now and then, but when you're feeling tired a gentle stroll can actually boost your energy. Try it next time you need a lift!



**What shall
we do today,
Mum?**

What'll it be? A stroll in the park? A gentle swim? A walk with the dog? Exercise doesn't have to be hard work to be good for you. Baby loves it when you're active, so help yourself to our ideas that'll get you up on your feet and your blood pressure down.

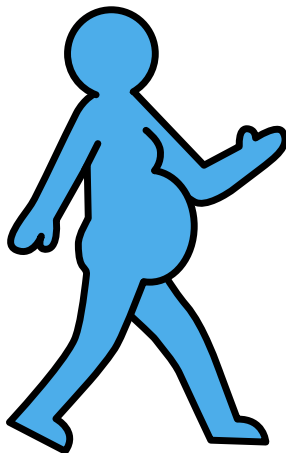
top tip

You'll probably find you're more thirsty than usual. So make sure you drink some water before you start your activity and always take an extra bottle with you.



on your feet

It's easier to fit in 30 minutes of walking each day than you'd think. And you don't have to do it all in one go... just a few minutes here, a few extra there and you'll have them ticked off in no time.



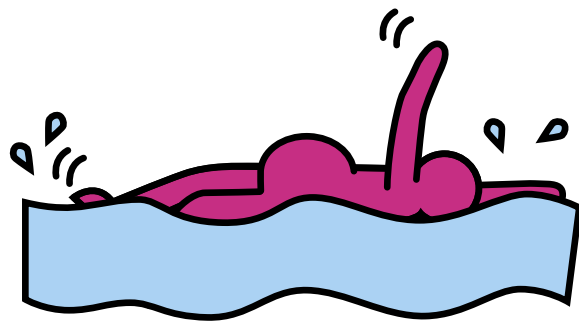
how to squeeze in 30 minutes

- Get off the bus a stop early
- Stroll to the shops instead of driving
- Take the stairs instead of the lift
- Take the dog for extra walks

bump 'n' splash

Is yours a little water baby? Let's find out! Swimming feels great when you're pregnant, as the water supports your bump and takes the strain off your back.

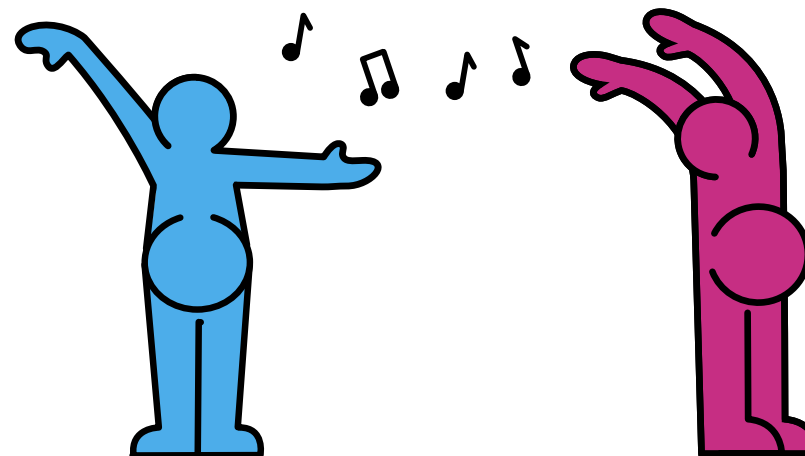
Does your local pool have an aqua-natal class? It's a gentle aerobics class with a splash! You don't always have to be able to swim to join in, and exercising with other mums-to-be is a fun way to stay active and meet new friends.



more, more, more!

If your bump gets the fitness bug, there are loads of activities you can try together.

Have a look at [nhs.uk/start4life](https://www.nhs.uk/start4life) for groups and services near you, or keep an eye out locally for yoga, dance or aerobic classes made especially for mums-to-be. Why not make a note of what's on in the back of this book?



top tips

- Wear flat shoes that support your ankles. Trainers are great if you've got them
- Choose a good, supportive bra
- You're bound to get a bit warm so wear loose, comfortable clothes
- Got other kids? Pick activities they can do too, like playing in the park



**I'm
growing
well**

super supplements

don't forget to take vitamin D and folic acid to help your baby develop

If you're not used to taking supplements, it can be hard to get in to the habit. But because it's important to take folic acid and vitamin D when you're pregnant, it's good to make them a part of your daily routine.

The experts recommend you take a 10 microgram dose of vitamin D every day. This helps control the amount of calcium in your body – and baby's – which you both need for healthy bones and strong teeth. If you're planning on breastfeeding, it's a good idea to keep taking it after the birth, too. Taking 400 micrograms of folic acid every day in the first 12 weeks of your pregnancy can also help protect against birth defects like spina bifida.

Just remember, supplements are just that – supplements. They shouldn't take the place of a healthy, balanced diet full of fruit, veg and nutrients.

myth buster

“aren't vitamins really expensive?”

Not at all. As you're pregnant, you can get folic acid and vitamin D supplements for free. Just search 'Healthy Start Scheme' online to find out how. You can also pick up a month's supply of folic acid or vitamin D at the supermarket for about £1.

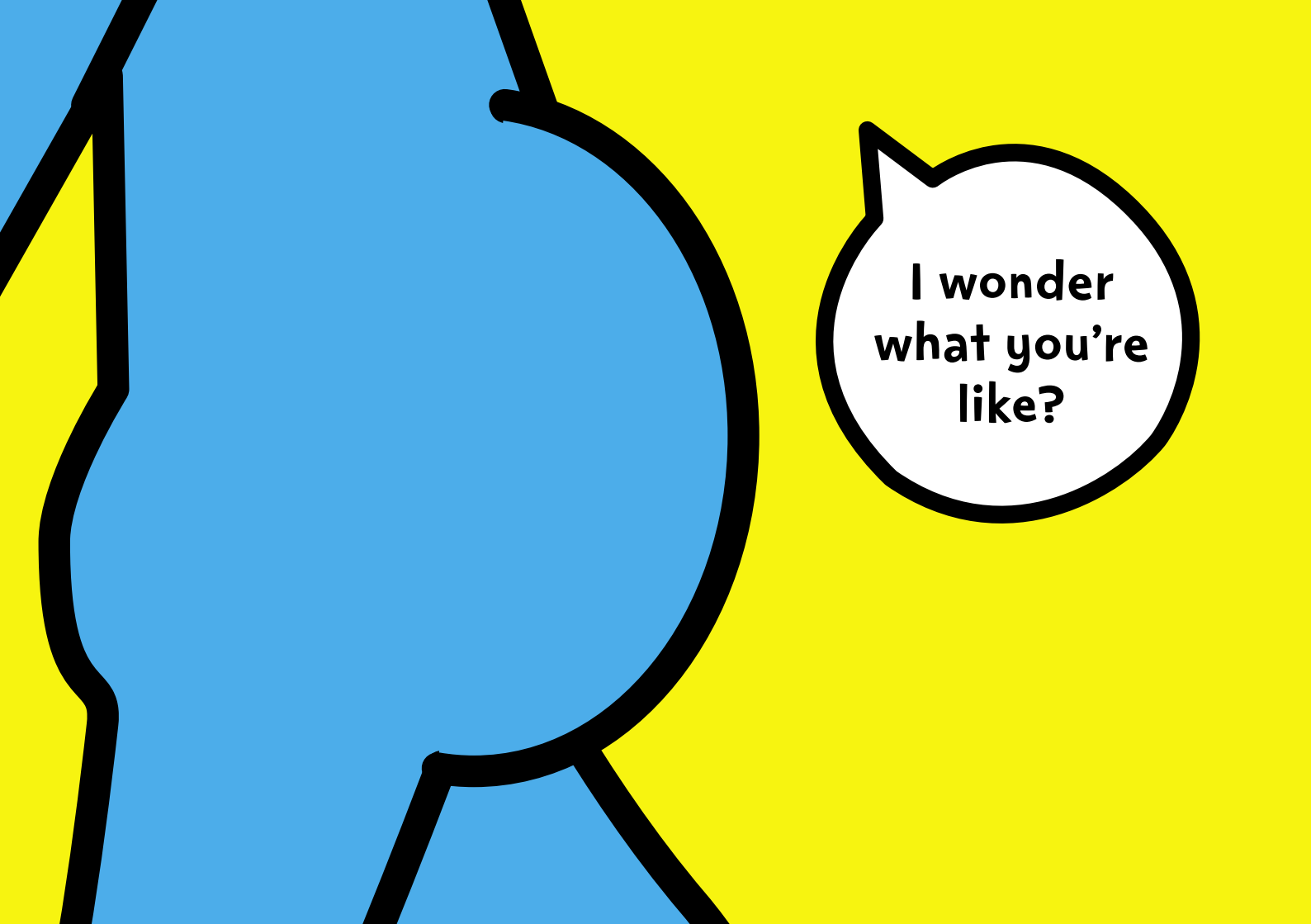
super foods

Vitamins don't just come in tablets; there are plenty on your plate, too. Find **iron** in lean meat (but avoid liver as the amount of vitamin A it contains can be harmful to your baby) and green leafy veg like broccoli. There's **vitamin C** in citrus fruits, blackcurrants and tomatoes, and bone-strengthening **calcium** in dairy products like milk and lower fat yoghurt.



top tip

To get into the habit of taking your supplements regularly, keep them somewhere you'll see them each day. What about by your toothbrush, so you'll remember to take them each morning or evening? It'll be part of your daily routine in no time.



**I wonder
what you're
like?**

getting bigger day by day

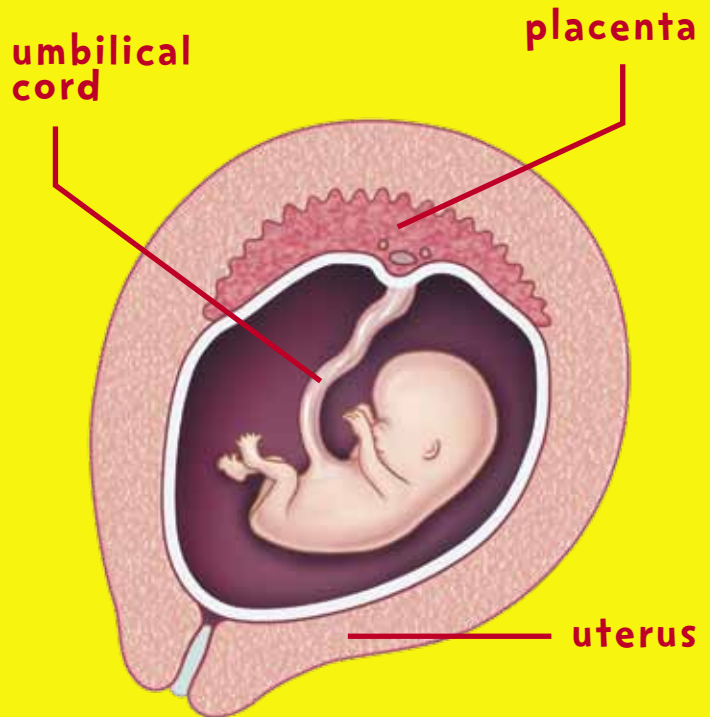
Your baby's getting bigger and more developed each and every day. It's fascinating! Here's a quick guide to just what's happening, and when.

at 12 weeks

Your baby is already fully formed. They've got a face, all their organs, muscles, limbs and bones. And although you can't feel it yet, your baby is busy moving around.

Because your body's changing, you might find that your moods do, too. So if you're feeling happy one minute and down the next, don't worry. Your emotions should soon calm down, but do talk to your midwife or doctor if you're concerned about how you're feeling.

Time to try... taking 10 micrograms of vitamin D every day to help your baby's teeth and bones develop. Your doctor or midwife can give you more information.



at 13-20 weeks

By the time you're 17 weeks pregnant, your baby has eyelashes and totally unique fingerprints. And by 20 weeks, you're already half way through your pregnancy and due for your second scan. You might even feel your baby moving inside you.

As your baby's had a growth spurt, your bump will have grown, too. This means you might find it tricky to drop off at night.

Time to try... a warm milky drink before bedtime. Sleeping on your side with a pillow between your legs can help you get comfy, too.



at 21-28 weeks

Baby's senses are coming alive! Your baby will be opening his or her eyes about now, their taste buds are forming, and their hearing is so developed they can even hear what's going on outside of the womb. By week 28 your baby will be completely formed, although still very small.

Your womb's also growing bigger every day. As your baby starts pressing on your tummy, it might cause a bit of indigestion.

Time to try... eating small, healthy meals to keep your energy up. Try and go for lower-fat, high-fibre options.



at 29-36 weeks

Your baby will be turning itself around now, as it prepares to be born. By week 33, your baby's brain and nervous system are all fully developed, too.

As there's not long to go now, you'll want to get your hospital bag packed and chat to your midwife about your birth plan.

Time to try... continuing your usual gentle exercise for as long as it's comfortable. This helps you stay fit and ready for labour.

at 37-42 weeks

Your baby is ready to be born after 37 weeks, although some women don't give birth until 42 weeks.

You might be feeling nervous about the birth; that's completely natural. Ask your health care professional for advice and what'll happen if you go overdue.

Time to try... sticking to all your healthy habits after the birth! And remember, your midwife or health visitor can give you loads of tips on looking after your brand new baby.





Thanks
Mum

what you drink, your baby drinks too

swap booze for juice or tea

Switching to non-alcoholic drinks is really important when you're pregnant. Your baby's liver isn't fully formed until the very last weeks of pregnancy, so it's safest to avoid all alcohol during pregnancy.

Drinking during pregnancy increases the risk of your baby being born with problems such as facial deformities, emotional and learning difficulties, and poor growth.

The only way to avoid this risk completely is not to drink anything at all. That's why the NHS recommends you avoid alcohol when you're pregnant. But if you do choose to drink, minimise the risk to your baby by limiting yourself to 1 or 2 units once or twice a week and don't get drunk.

top tip

Try not to drink more than two mugs of instant coffee a day. Try decaffeinated cappas or just go for water or fruit juice instead. Remember, energy drinks are high in caffeine, too.

how the units add up



A small 125ml glass of wine (ABV 13%) is 1.6 units



A 440ml can of regular strength lager, beer or cider (ABV 4.5%) is 2 units

myth buster

“won't the placenta protect my baby from bad stuff, like booze?”

No. The placenta lets substances like alcohol pass directly from your blood stream into your baby's; there's no barrier at all. So when booze enters your blood, it goes into your baby's blood too. The trouble is, baby's liver isn't fully developed yet, so it can't process the alcohol like yours can.



baby on the way, quit today

when you're pregnant, if you smoke your baby smokes

Smoking when you're pregnant is like blowing smoke in your unborn baby's face. So if there's ever been a time for you and your partner to pack in the cigs, it's now. And if your partner, family or friends won't quit, at least ask them to smoke less around you.

Mums who smoke dramatically increase their risk of miscarriage and stillbirth. And there's 40% more chance that your baby will die from cot death.

The facts speak for themselves. Packing it in is the most important thing you can do for your baby. So please, quit today.

top tip

We know quitting isn't easy, but you can do it. Ask your health visitor or doctor for help, visit [smokefree.nhs.uk](https://www.smokefree.nhs.uk) or call the NHS Pregnancy Smoking Helpline on **0800 169 9169**. They're not there to judge; they just want to help you decide how to quit on your terms.

myth busters

“but my friend smoked and her baby's fine”

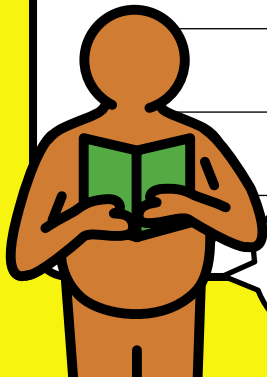
There's now more proof than ever that smoking is dangerous – both for your unborn baby and you. It's just not worth the risk. And even if you've smoked through your pregnancy so far, it's not too late to stop. The benefits kick in straight away.

“i'll get stressed if I stop... isn't that bad for baby?”

Not at all. Stopping smoking instantly lowers your blood pressure. And that's good for both baby and you. Need more reasons to pack it in? Quit today and you're less likely to suffer morning sickness, and more likely to have a smoother pregnancy and birth.

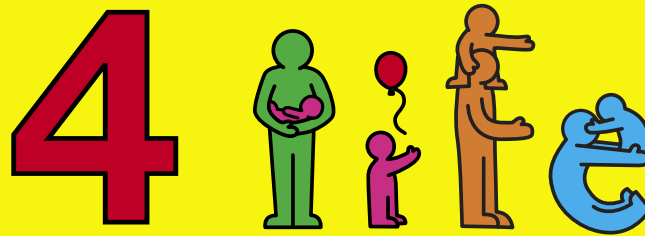
You're bound to have some questions you want to ask your midwife, health visitor or doctor. Jot them down here, along with the dates of your next appointments, so you'll remember to ask them. Or search online for Start4Life anytime you like.

And now you know how important these healthy habits are, why not make a note of which ones you're going to take up. There's no time like right now!



What's on your mind, Mum?

start



for more information search [start4life](#)