

Walsall Best Start for Life

A booklet for you
and your baby

Sign
up to our
newsletter and visit
our website here



Website: [Walsall Family Hubs](#)

Email: Familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk

 [Walsall Families in the Know](#)



Funded by
UK Government



Walsall Healthcare
NHS Trust



Walsall Council



Welcome

Congratulations on your new or expectant baby!

This booklet aims to offer families information and advice about the first two years of your baby's life.

Research has shown that the first 1,001 days of a child's life are crucial for their development and wellbeing and can have a significant impact on their future.

We want every child in Walsall to have the best possible start in life.

If you have a newborn, or are expecting, take advantage of our one-stop booklet, 'Best Start for Life', which has been collaboratively developed by a range of services

such as; Health Visiting Team, Early Years Team, Speech and Language, Maternity, Early Help and Family Hubs.

This booklet includes all you need to know about the support available in Walsall throughout your baby's first two years. Discover local childcare options, support groups and services, breastfeeding help, first aid guidance and lots of useful information to help you and your baby.



Check out our Family Hubs website

by scanning here and visit our Facebook page *Walsall Families In The Know* to keep updated on what's on offer.



For more information around pregnancy,

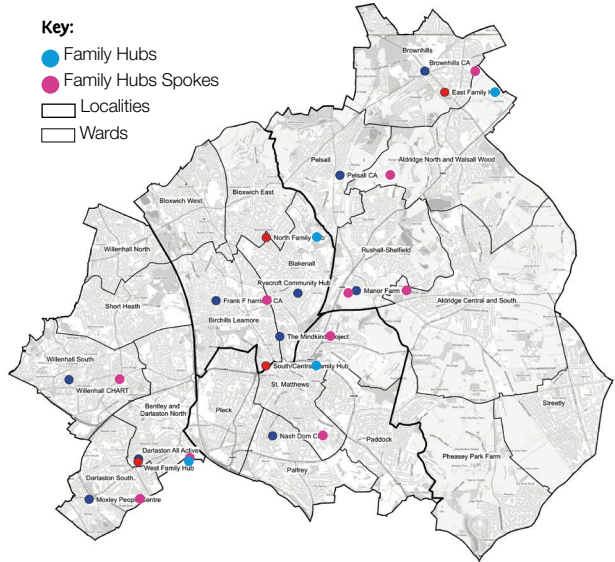
keeping healthy, upcoming scans, birth options, Walsall's antenatal care and important contact numbers including midwives scan this QR code:



What are Family Hubs and where are they located?

Walsall's four Locality Family Hubs provide a welcoming space where children, young people aged 0-19 (and up to 25 for those young people with additional needs), and their families can go to get advice and support when they need it. Our Family Hubs are in the heart of local communities where services have come together providing one 'front door' access to get help and to talk to someone in a safe space about sensitive things that may be worrying them.

Family Hubs Walsall Borough



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Opening Hours: 9.00am – 5.00pm. Website: walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk

Family Hubs	Address & Telephone Number
North Locality Family Hub	275 Blakenall Lane, Blakenall, Walsall WS3 1HJ 01922 476698
South and Central Locality Family Hub	Birchills Street, Walsall, WS2 8NF 01922 646574
West Locality Family Hub	Ilmington House, Crescent Rd, Wednesbury, WS10 8AE 01922 652959
East Locality Family Hub	Silver Court, Walsall, WS8 6HA 01922 658300

Your views on Family Hubs?

We would like to invite all families to give feedback and share their voices to help shape the Family Hubs. We are looking for a group of Parents and Carers who are expecting or have children aged 0-5 years, that are passionate about local services for families, to help us shape Walsall Family Hubs to ensure the right services are available to you at the right time.

You can help us by completing feedback forms, joining a panel which will meet every two months, joining virtual feedback sessions or being a mystery caller at one of our Family Hubs or Spokes.



In return for your support, we can offer free training opportunities, access to our volunteer programme and opportunities to develop skills and knowledge. To sign up, scan this QR code.

In addition to our Hubs, Walsall also has Family Hub Spokes, which are voluntary and community buildings located in the heart of communities across the borough. They offer activities and support for families. Scan here for more information:



Your pregnancy journey

Being pregnant is an exciting journey for any family, however we understand there can be lots of unknowns and questions you may have! This booklet will help you to find out all the information you may need!

When will I see my midwife?

First Trimester

Second Trimester

0-16 weeks of pregnancy

4-6 weeks – Complete your **Badgernet Self Referral Form** (It may take 1-2 weeks from completing your referral, to receiving an appointment)

7-10 weeks – Early Bird Appointment with a Maternity Support Worker plus offer to book blood tests with screening for **Infectious Diseases** and **Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia**

8-10 weeks – Booking Appointment with Community Midwife

11-14 weeks – First Trimester Ultrasound Scan plus offer of **First Trimester Screening**

16 Weeks – Community Midwife Appointment at your registered GP Surgery

17-28 weeks of pregnancy

18-21 weeks – **Anomaly Ultrasound Scan**

25 weeks – Community Midwife Appointment – your MATB1 can be completed and your midwife will discuss the importance of monitoring your **Baby's Movements**

26-28 weeks – **Glucose Tolerance Test** (if required)

28 weeks – Community Midwife Appointment plus offer to take a blood test to check your blood levels, blood group and antibodies and offer an **Anti D Injection** if Negative Blood Group

All Community Midwife Appointments will be at your Registered GP Surgery – your midwife will complete an Antenatal Check and ask you for a Urine Sample

It's important to inform a health professional when you find out you are pregnant. Complete a self referral here.



Walsall's antenatal classes

In Walsall we deliver a number of classes and sessions that you can access to support you ahead of your baby's arrival, helping you, your family and your baby connect throughout your journey to build a strong and loving relationship. Please scan here for more information about our womb to world workshop service:



Third Trimester

Fourth Trimester

29-42 weeks of pregnancy

Throughout the third trimester you will see your Community Midwife at:

31 Weeks (if this is your first baby)

34 Weeks

36 Weeks

38 Weeks

40 Weeks (if this is your first baby)

41 + 42 Weeks (if you have not had your baby yet)

You will be offered a **Membrane Sweep** at 40+ weeks & an **Induction of Labour** 10-12 days past your due date



0-3 months postnatal

The day after you get home - a Community Midwife will come and see you in your home

Day 3 – Feeding Support Home Visit (if you wish), you can also call our **Infant Feeding** team for support

Day 5 – Postnatal Appointment at Hatherton Medical Centre plus offer to complete your baby's **Heelprick Test**

Day 10-14 - Postnatal Appointment within Antenatal Clinic, Route 122

Between 14 and 28 days the midwife will discharge you and your baby to the care of your Health Visitor & GP

Download the FREE Baby Buddy app – now with an extra feature just for parents in Walsall!



Your baby's journey

This section will help you know what to expect during these early weeks and months. To show how you can support your baby's learning and development, you can find out more at walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk

0-3 Months

10-14 days: New Birth Visit with a Health Visitor in your home.

0-42 days: Register your child's birth

- 0 to 4 weeks: It might appear to you that I can only eat, sleep and poo but I'm already developing social and communication skills. I watch you watching me and I love hearing you talk to me.
- 4 to 8 weeks: My vision is becoming clearer and I am becoming stronger and more vocal. I can be frightened by sudden noises.
- 6 weeks: Development review for your baby with a Practitioner from Health Visiting, in a clinic setting or at home, and Postnatal check with your GP.
- 8 weeks: Immunisations.
- 8 to 12 weeks: I am getting stronger and my movements are getting smoother. Keep putting me in a variety of different positions to help me discover the world around me. Talk to me and I will try to copy your facial expressions.

4 - 5 Months

- 12 weeks: Immunisations.
- I am beginning to develop and use my tummy muscles. I am curious about what my legs can do and I might want to be held in a standing position.
- You will start to see changes in how I react to others. I might start to appear shy or upset around people I don't know so well.
- I love to listen to your stories, songs and rhymes. I will stop and listen to your voice even when I can't see you.
- 16 weeks: Immunisations.
- Breast milk or first-stage infant formula provides me with all I need until I am six months old.



You need to register your newborn baby within 42 days of birth. You can register your baby by scanning here:



6 - 8 Months

- I am developing more control over my hands and am starting to use them more effectively. I can reach out for something and grab it without missing. I am starting to sit up.
- I like to put things in my mouth and dribble a lot. I like to have you near me and I am getting stronger every day.
- It's time for me to try solid foods. Let me try a variety of foods and let me make a mess. Show me that eating is fun.

13- 18 Months

- I am keen to try to do things for myself, like dressing and feeding. Please be patient!
- We can all eat the same foods now, so let's enjoy meals together.
- I might be getting quicker and steadier at walking, or I might only just be starting to take my first independent steps. Remember that's okay as each of us develop at a different rate.
- I am starting to talk and recognise words, repeat words to me I will not get bored.

9- 12 Months

- I'm starting to find my feet and explore the world from new heights. This is a very hectic stage and I will move faster than you think, so be prepared!
- I am starting to understand everyday words in my daily routines like 'clap hands' and 'up'. You might hear me starting to babble and say strings of sounds together.
- 12 months: Immunisations.

19- 24 Months

- I can make you understand what I need and want. I can ask for food, drinks and toys. Teach me to say please and thank you. I can understand simple words and follow basic instructions, such as 'Get your shoes, please'.
- I am getting faster and will run and jump. I like the stairs and to explore. I like to build and kick a ball and throw things.
- 24 months: Development review for your toddler with a Practitioner from Health visiting in a clinic setting or at home.

Did you know?

We have a Dads App in Walsall.
Download it here:
thedadpad.co.uk/
or scan the QR code



Children's health visits

When will I see my health visiting team?



Health visitors work with all parents to assess the support they need and develop appropriate programs to help give the child the best possible start in life.

They support and educate families from pregnancy through to when your child starts reception class.

Did you know?
You can contact your Health Visiting Team by scanning here:



Support in Pregnancy



Premature Babies and Medical Needs



Early intervention to support positive health outcomes for families when experiencing difficult times



Support with Children in a care setting



Support for families in temporary accommodation, asylum seekers, no recourse to public funds, refugees, migrants and the travelling community.



Support for families of children with additional needs and special educational needs

Feeding your baby

Feeding your baby is a chance to get to know them and help develop a close and loving bond. In Walsall we have lots of top tips and services that can help you on this journey.

Top Tips

- Skin-to-skin contact can help if your baby needs comforting or calming. It can also help boost your milk supply
- Babies go to the breast for milk and for comfort, pain relief and to help them go to sleep. Remember, you can not over feed your baby at the breast.
- If you are giving milk in a bottle, keep the bottle horizontal and feed at your baby's pace
- Responding to your baby with love and cuddles helps them grow up to be happy and independent.
- We have Breastfeeding Peer Support groups at our Family Hubs. Visit the Family Hubs website to check venues and dates.

Did you know?

Breastfeeding lowers the risk of SIDS. Scan here for more information:



Walsall offers a range of services and support to all expectant and new parents. To access support, scan this QR code:



Did you know?

Breastmilk is tailor-made for your baby. It boosts your baby's ability to fight illness and infection

National Breastfeeding Helpline

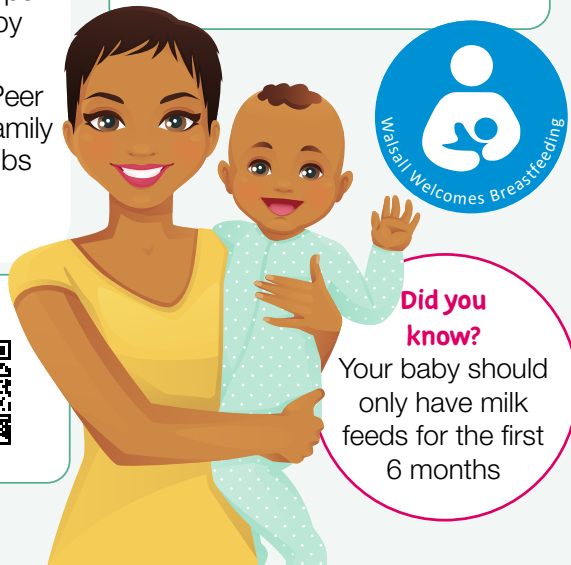
0300 100 0212*

available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk

Did you know?

Breastfeeding lowers a mother's risk of breast cancer and may also reduce the risk of ovarian cancer



Did you know?

Your baby should only have milk feeds for the first 6 months

Introducing solid foods to your baby



You can start introducing solid foods when your baby is around the age of 6 months and showing signs of developmental readiness.

How much your baby eats is less important than getting them used to the idea of eating.

They'll still be getting most of their energy and nutrients from milk feeds.

Giving your baby a variety of foods, alongside milk feeds, from around 6 months of age will help set your child up for a lifetime of healthier eating. Gradually, you'll be able to increase the amount and variety of food your baby eats.

Did you know?

All breastfed babies are recommended to take Vitamin D. Scan this QR code for more information:



You are welcome to come along and join us at one of the local Family Hubs where a member of the Infant Feeding service will be available to answer any questions and support you through this exciting stage in your baby's feeding journey. To book your place email us at familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk

Useful websites for introducing solid foods to your baby

Scan this QR code to watch a video:



www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk/

www.firststepsnutrition.org

www.nhs.uk/start-for-life/baby

www.unicef.org.uk/babyfriendly

www.walsallhealthychild.co.uk/

As you start introducing your baby to solids, they may be at risk of choking – for information on tips and what to do scan this QR code:



What to do if your baby is choking

1. Slap it out

- Lay your baby face down on your thigh and support their head.
- Give up to five blows between their shoulder blades.



2. Check their mouth

- Carefully pick anything out.
- Lay your baby on your thigh face up.
- Using two fingers, give up to five chest thrusts.
- Check the mouth. If the obstruction hasn't cleared, call 999/112 for emergency help.



3. Call 999/112

- Take your baby with you while you call **999** or **112**.
- Repeat the above steps until help arrives.

Healthy Teeth

From brushing their first tooth to their first trip to the dentist, here's how to take care of your children's teeth.

A regular teeth-cleaning routine is essential for good dental health. Follow these tips and you can help keep your kids' teeth decay-free.

Toothbrushing tips

It's important to use a fluoride toothpaste, as this helps prevent and control tooth decay.



Children aged up to 3 years

Visit [nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/](https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/healthy-teeth-and-gums/taking-care-of-childrens-teeth/) or scan QR code.



- Start brushing your baby's teeth as soon as the first milk tooth breaks through (usually at around 6 months, but it can be earlier or later).
- Parents or carers should brush the teeth.
- Brush teeth twice daily, for about 2 minutes with fluoride toothpaste.
- Brush last thing at night before bed and on 1 other occasion.
- Use children's fluoride toothpaste containing no less than 1,000ppm of fluoride (check label) unless a dentist advises family toothpaste containing between 1,350ppm and 1,500ppm fluoride.
- Use only a smear of toothpaste.
- Make sure children don't eat or lick toothpaste from the tube.
- Are you pregnant or have children under the age of four? You could qualify for the Healthy Start scheme to help you buy food, milk and get free Healthy Start vitamins. Find out if you're eligible by scanning the QR code or visiting <https://www.healthystart.nhs.uk/how-to-apply/>



Childcare

Are you looking for childcare in Walsall?

Childcare is expanding to support parents to return to work and help to grow the economy.

If you have a child under 5 years old, please visit: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk/ to check your eligibility and to make an application.

To discuss your Walsall childcare options, call Families Information Service on **01922 653383** or visit: www.mywalsall.org/fis/



Keeping your baby safe

Your health visitor will give you advice and support to help you care for your new baby. Here are some of the most important things to remember:

For top tips and information on safe sleeping scan QR code:



Safe Sleeping

It's important to create a safe environment to help you and your baby get as much rest as possible.

Things you can do:



Lie your baby on their back at the foot of the cot



Keep the cot clear



Use a firm, flat, waterproof mattress



Keep your baby smoke-free



Avoid your baby overheating



Sleep your baby in the same room as you for at least the first six months

Things which can be dangerous:

- Sleeping on a sofa or in an armchair with your baby.
- Sleeping in the same bed as your baby, especially if you smoke, drink or take drugs, are extremely tired, or if your baby was born prematurely or was a low birth weight.
- Letting your baby get too hot.
- Covering your baby's face or head while they are sleeping.
- Loose bedding or toys in babies' cot or Moses basket.

Keeping your baby safe

It might seem a long way off now, but it won't be long before your sleepy, newborn baby can wriggle, kick, and roll over.

Babies and children often have accidents because they develop so quickly. It is important to stay one step ahead by thinking about the accidents that might be associated with their new skills and how to prevent these.

Babies can cry for different reasons, like when they are hungry, wet/dirty or if they are unwell. Sometimes babies can cry for no particular reason.

Always remember **ICON**:
Infant crying is normal and it will stop.

Comfort methods will sometimes help and the crying will stop.

OK to walk away for a few minutes to calm down if the baby is safe and the crying is getting to you.

Never ever shake or hurt a baby.

For more information scan this QR code



Things you can do to avoid accidents:

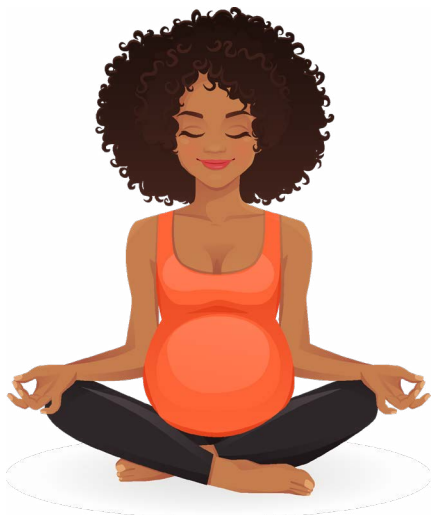
- Change your baby's nappy on a changing mat on the floor.
- Do not leave your baby unattended on a bed, sofa or changing table, even for a second, as they could roll off.
- Keep small objects and plastic bags out of your baby's reach and be careful if older children have toys with small parts.
- If you're having a well deserved hot drink, put it down out of reach before you hold your baby. A hot drink can still scald 15 minutes after it was made.
- At bath time, run cold water into the bath first, and then add some hot water. Test the temperature of the water with your elbow. Never leave your baby alone in the bath, even for a moment.
- For lots more information on how to protect your child from some of the most common accidents, as well as tips on car safety and keeping your baby safe in the sun, please visit: [NHSBabySafety](https://www.nhs.uk/health/a-z/nhs-baby-safety) or scan above.
- Visit the Child Accident Prevention Trust webpage [capt.org.uk/](https://www.capt.org.uk/)



Supporting your mental wellbeing

For many parents, welcoming a new member into their family is a joyous and positive experience filled with happiness and excitement to create new lasting memories. However, it is important to remember that it is okay to not have the same feelings as others and some people's journey from pregnancy to parenthood isn't a smooth transition-remember it is okay to not be okay!

Having a baby is a huge life event, and it is natural to feel a range of emotions. However, if these feelings start to significantly impact your life, you might be experiencing a perinatal mental health problem.



During your pregnancy you may have heard the terms "perinatal mental health" and "maternal mental health." Both refer to mental health during pregnancy and up to two years after giving birth.

We also have support available for Fathers including peer support groups, activities and personalised Apps. For more information visit www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk/

Did you know we have a counselling service for new and expectant parents and care givers? Secure beginnings provide an Emotional Wellbeing Counselling Service to pregnant and postnatal parents and care givers residing in Walsall (Including grandparents and adults supporting with care). For more information please contact any member of our CTS team on 01902 826 306 or 01902 826 308

If you are concerned about your mental health during pregnancy, or after having your baby, please speak to your GP, midwife, or nursery nurse. They will then refer you to our service when appropriate. Scan here to contact your community midwife.



Lets talk relationships

Becoming a parent is a wonderful experience and there are times when you can feel worried or stressed due to a variety of factors that may impact your relationship - Arguments happen to **over 55%** of couples, so don't worry.

Babies, even when in the womb, can react to arguments. Within the first few months after birth can learn very quickly to respond to adverse conditions to keep themselves safe.

All couples must deal with difficult subjects, it's part of life, it's part of growing as a family, and children will learn to constructively communicate if they witness it for themselves.

However, when arguing is: **Regular, Intense** and **Unresolved**, it can have a greater impact on your child.

When children regularly witness intense and unresolved arguments between their parents, it can lead to: difficulties in school, challenges with mental health, and issues in forming and maintaining relationships both during childhood and later in life.

Within Walsall, The Family Hubs are the ideal place to ask for help. There are various apps, interventions, and courses to sign up to, along with more informal sessions designed to support parents, show that you are not alone and give parents strategies to be able to argue in a way where things get resolved. For your children's sake and for your own wellbeing and relationship do ask for help at the earliest opportunity.

Top Tips

If you find that discussions between you and your partner turn into arguments, there are a few things you can do to help resolve things.

- Listen to each other, give each other time to speak.
- Talk about how things make you feel.
- Show appreciation to each other, it makes difficult conversations so much easier to have.
- Try to remain calm, but if you feel like you are about to blow, take time out but come back and try again.
- Name calling, mockery, ill thought-out humour never resolves arguments, so try to avoid this.
- Remember, your arguing affects your child.
- Try to remember a time when you resolved things. How did it happen? Try to use the same techniques again.
- It is ok to agree to disagree sometimes, or say sorry, or compromise.

For more support on reducing parental conflict in Walsall scan here:



Did you know you can get additional parenting support in Walsall?

Walsall Heath Visiting Team offer some additional support around the following areas:

- Breastfeeding
- Introduction to Solid Foods
- Maternal Mental Health
- Fathers Support
- Early Language
- Managing Sleep
- Behaviour
- Toileting
- SEND

These are delivered by: providing information packs, virtual webinars, workshops, groups and face to face.

If you require advice and support from us, contact our Single Point of Access on **01922 603074** or send a text explaining your concerns with your child's name, date of birth and NHS number to **07520 634909**.

The parenting team work with other professionals in early years and children's services to provide early help. This is the term we use to describe the support we give to children and their families when they

need extra help. You can find out more about early help by visiting the Walsall Council website.

Being a parent or carer is a wonderful and rewarding experience, but it's not always easy. Babies, children and young people can test us all at times. You can contact the parenting team for further advice and guidance on earlyhelpparentingteam@walsall.gov.uk or **01922 423349**



Free online courses for all parents, carers, grandparents and teens

Nurturing emotional health and wellbeing from bump to 19+ years

Walsall Council has partnered with the Solihull Approach to offer free access to expertly designed online courses for parents, carers, grandparents and teens living in the region. Sign up to understand your child's feelings, as well as your own, as you go through life as a family. Learn to understand the changes in your child's development and how to support them and strengthen your relationship.



Supporting your Child's Learning and Development at Home

Visit www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk/0-2/Supporting-your-Child-s-Learning-and-Development-at-Home#main

Bookstart aims to provide every newborn baby in Walsall with a Bookstart Baby pack at their 6 weeks check-up with the Health Visitor. Children's brains experience the most growth in a child's first five years. Stimulation from books, stories and rhymes enhances the development of children's learning that extends far beyond childhood. For more information and resources visit www.booktrust.org.uk

National Literacy

Trust Discover practical tips, fun activities and reassuring support to help your child's literacy journey, on our Words for Life website. We have plenty of ways to nurture your child's reading, speaking, listening and writing development at home.



Tiny Happy People

Explore simple activities to help you develop your children's early language and social skills. Visit: www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people

Easy Peasy App

Free for all families in Walsall, access ideas and information to help you support your child's communication, play and social skills.



Story and Rhyme Sessions

Libraries are a great place to visit with your child. You can find lots of great events, information and support, including free Story and Rhyme sessions, held throughout the week

go.walsall.gov.uk/walsall-libraries

You can download our tip sheets on:

go.walsall.gov.uk/children-and-young-people/early-help/early-help-parents or scan the QR code



“Because we are committed to supporting our children to thrive and we all need a bit of headspace and thinking time occasionally.”

Keeping you and your baby well

Screening

You will be offered newborn screening tests for your baby soon after they are born. The results from these tests can help make sure that your baby is given appropriate treatment as quickly as possible, if needed. You will be offered a newborn hearing test and the newborn bloodspot test, which checks for nine rare but serious health conditions. You will also be invited for a physical check of your baby at six to eight weeks with your GP. If your baby did not have their hearing test in hospital, you will be contacted about having an appointment locally. Speak to your health visitor for more information.



Immunisations

Vaccinations are offered free of charge in the UK – just book your appointments with your GP and speak to your health visitor if you have any questions. The first routine vaccinations for babies are due at eight weeks. Remember, as well as protecting your own baby, you're also protecting other babies and children by preventing the spread of diseases.



Pertussis vaccine - Pregnant women should have a whooping cough vaccine around the time of their mid-pregnancy scan (usually 20 weeks) but can get the vaccine between 16 and 32 weeks

Flu vaccine - Pregnant women should have a free flu vaccine during each pregnancy. It can be given at any stage of pregnancy and as early as possible in the flu season

RSV vaccine - Pregnant women should have the RSV vaccine around the time of their 28-week antenatal appointment.

COVID-19 vaccine - Pregnant women should have the vaccine during any stage of pregnancy, from the first few weeks up to your expected due date.

For more helpful information on caring for your baby, please visit:

www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby

Register your baby at a GP in Walsall

It's important to register your baby with a GP as soon as possible, in case you need their help. You can contact your GP at any time, whether it's for you or your child. If your baby is not yet registered with a GP but needs to see one, you can receive emergency treatment from any GP surgery. If you're worried your baby is ill, you can find advice at www.nhs.uk/conditions/baby/health. New mums will also be offered a postnatal check with their GP six to eight weeks after the birth to make sure they feel well and are recovering from giving birth. For more information, visit [NHS 6 Weeks Check](#)



Are you worried about your mental health?

It's completely normal, when you have a new baby, to feel sad, worried about a lack of instant connection etc but it's important to get support if you need it. There are lots of services that can support you, in confidence and without judgement; you can find them on the Perinatal Services page of the Black Country Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust website (or contact 01922 607807). Speak to your Midwife or Health Visitor if you are having feelings of anxiety or low mood that you cannot manage, or that make looking after your baby difficult. Scan here for more info:



Where can I go with my baby?

It's great to meet with other parents and carers. Find out what groups are running in your local area including baby groups, baby play and explore, and baby massage. All of these sessions will support your baby's development and help you communicate and bond with your baby. Find activities and sessions by downloading the [0-5 newsletter](#) or scan here.



Play

Play is very important to your child's development. It supports their learning and emotional development and can develop many skills through regularly playing and engaging in playful experiences. This will develop their language skills, emotions, creativity and social skills. There are a range of 'stay and play' sessions across the borough, where you can meet other families and professionals who will support you to support your baby's learning.



Scan here
for full details

Get face to face

Get down to your child's level, or bring them up to you. This will help them to track your mouth movements, keep eye contact and hold their attention on you for longer. This helps them notice and learn about facial expressions and body language.

Copy your child and add a bit more

This helps your child learn how to say longer sentences. For example, your child says "car", you say "Car. Big car."

Pause and give your child time to respond

When you talk to your child, give them lots of time to respond. This is the same whether making babbling noises with your baby or using real words. They may respond with a look, a sound, a gesture or a word.

Follow your child's interests

Babies and young children are more likely to learn new things when you follow their lead. Your child will listen to you more and they will know you are interested in them.

Did you know?

Walsall Speech and Language Therapy can help if your child is experiencing communication difficulties. Contact walsall.slt@NHS.net or 01922 605400

Talk about what you are doing & what your child can see

Narrating what is happening can help your child learn new words and understand their meaning. This can be during daily activities such as when changing a nappy, having a bath or feeding, as well as when playing together.

Play listening and sound games

Switch off the TV and music so your child can focus on your voice. Make babble sounds for them to listen to. Change your intonation and volume to make your voice more interesting. Play with musical instruments, such as shakers and bells. When there is a noise in the environment, such as the doorbell or a car, point it out and label what made the noise “I hear the doorbell”

Reduce the number of questions

Try to avoid asking your toddler lots of questions about what they are doing in their play. This could get overwhelming and they might struggle to answer. Instead, try using statements to describe what’s happening. For example, you could say “You have 3 teddies”, instead of, “How many teddies have you got?” This will help your child learn new words and develop their understanding of sentence structure.



Spend special time together

When it comes to communication and interaction, you are your child’s most important teacher. Find at least ten minutes special time every day where you turn off other distractions, such as the TV, music and your phone. Get down to their level and play. Try to use the tips shown above. Have fun and cherish the bond you are building with each other.

Say it again and again

Babies and young children like repetition and learn by copying. It helps them work out what words mean. Nursery rhymes are also helpful for building repetition into your child’s day.

Give choices

For example: “Do you want apple or biscuit? Apple? Here’s your apple” This gives your child the words they need and helps them think about what they want to communicate. They may look at or point to an object or say a word to show you what they want.

Top Tips for communications with babies and young children

Support available in Walsall and how to get in touch

Alcohol and Drug Misuse	If you feel you are struggling with alcohol or drug misuse, don't go through it alone. It's important for you and your family that you get the support you need. Change Grow Live can support you with a range of services in a safe and confidential space changegrowlive.org/the-beacon-walsall
Chat Health	ChatHealth is a confidential, secure text-messaging service run by Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust for parents of children aged 0-5 years. The service operates from Monday to Friday, 9.00am-4.30pm, excluding Bank Holidays. All texts are responded to by a Health Visitor within 24 hours. You can find out more information on the service via their webpage Text: 07520 634909
Childcare	To discuss your Walsall childcare options, call Family Information Service on 01922 653383 . For more information on other types of childcare funding support visit: www.childcarechoices.gov.uk
Citizens' Advice	Citizens' Advice offer free, confidential, independent and impartial advice on a range of topics, including benefits and legal issues. They have telephone helplines, and also offer face-to-face meetings at their local offices and via their mobile advice unit service . Telephone: Advice Line: 0808 278 7812 Debt Helpline: 0800 240 4420 Website: citizensadviceandwell-walsall.org/
Domestic abuse	If a family member, partner or carer hurts, threatens, or tries to control you, or you don't feel safe in your community, there is confidential support and advice available from Walsall Council. Alternatively, call the National Domestic Abuse Helpline: 0808 802 5565
Early Help	Visit the website for information on Walsall Council's Early Help resources to support children and families who may need extra help with a whole range of individual, social, health and educational concerns. Support is provided to the whole family, to ensure the right help at the right time is available. You can also contact earlyhelpleadprofessional@walsall.gov.uk or 0300 555 2866 (opt 1)
What groups are on for me and my baby	Check out Walsall Early Years Newsletter
Employment - Walsall Works	Walsall Works is an award winning initiative funded by Walsall Council to support local people to find jobs, apprenticeships and access training, while also supporting local businesses that are looking to expand and invest in their future workforce.
Food Banks	Do you need help with the cost of living? Find your about your local foodbank
Health Visiting service	Please get in touch using the single point of access number 01922 603074 if you wish to speak to a Health Visitor.
Housing	You can find answers to your housing queries, homelessness, social housing, help with saving energy and help to find a home on the housing webpages

Maternity	www.walsallhealthcare.nhs.uk/our-services/maternity/
Parenting Support	We have lots of parenting information available on for families on our website .
Special Education Needs and Disabilities (Local Offer)	Find out about help available for children and young people (aged 0-25) with special educational needs and disabilities (this is called the Local Offer) in Walsall at send.walsall.gov.uk/
Stop Smoking	Walsall has its very own app to support you to stop smoking, find out more here: www.mysmokefreelifewalsall.co.uk/
Volunteer opportunities	We have a volunteering scheme and opportunities for parents, carers, children and young people to join Early Help forums. We strongly believe and advocate the power of co-production and encourage you to get involved. To find out more about becoming an Early Help Volunteer visit the website or contact earlyhelpvolunteers@walsall.gov.uk
Need Help accessing Walsall council services?	Walsall Connected offers in-person digital upskilling, general advice and signposting to ensure residents can get the help they need at a local community partner or library. Visit one of our Walsall Connected centres
Walsall Family Hubs	Walsall's four Locality Family Hubs provide a welcoming space where children, young people aged 0-19 (and up to 25 for those with additional needs) and their families can go to get advice and support when they need it. Our Family Hubs are in the heart of local communities where services have come together, providing one place to get help and to talk to someone in a safe space about sensitive things that may be worrying them. For more information, check out www.walsallfamilyhubs.co.uk or contact familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk
Walsall Speech and Language Therapy service	If you have concerns about your child's communication development, initially talk to their health visitor or their nursery/school for support. You can also try the progress tracker on this link progress-checker.speechandlanguage.org.uk/ . You can access short videos with additional advice once you have completed it. If you continue to have concerns, it may be that your child would benefit from a speech and language assessment. E-mail walsall.slt@NHS.net or call 01922 605400
Young Carers	A child or young person under the age 18, who provides regular and ongoing care and emotional support to a family member who is physically or mentally disabled or misuses substances is a Young Carer. There is help available in Walsall including a Young Carers assessment, ID cards, leisure cards, Young Carers champions and Walsall Young Carers group. For more information, visit the webpages

Contact Us

You can discover groups for 0 – 2 years in Walsall by visiting Walsall Family Hubs website or follow us on Facebook [WalsallFamiliesintheKnow](https://www.facebook.com/WalsallFamiliesintheKnow)

If you organise or manage a group, we would be happy to showcase your contact details on our directory and newsletter. Please get in touch: familyhubs@walsall.gov.uk



Scan the QR code to sign up to our newsletter. Visit our website for all up to date information on what's on, including groups and events and information to help you and your family!



Walsall Council



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