



Faculty of Public Health
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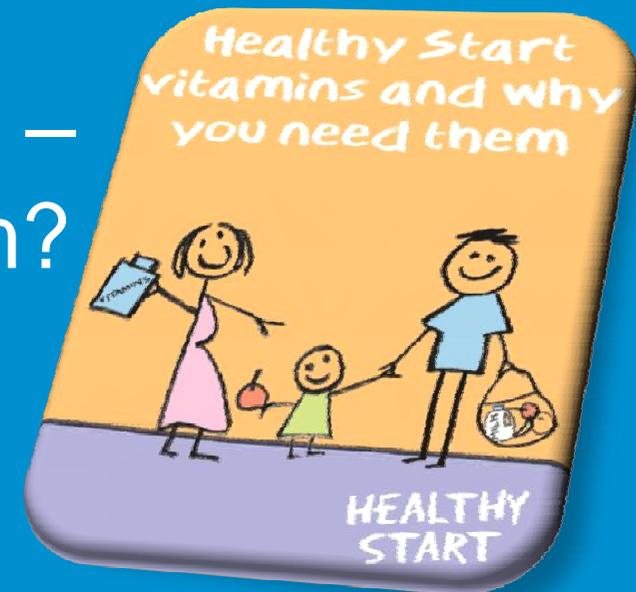
Public Health in Scotland Transcending Boundaries

Thursday 2 & Friday 3 November 2017

The Healthy Start Scheme – Vitamins: Who needs them?

NHS Lothian:

Faye Buckingham and Sabina McDonald



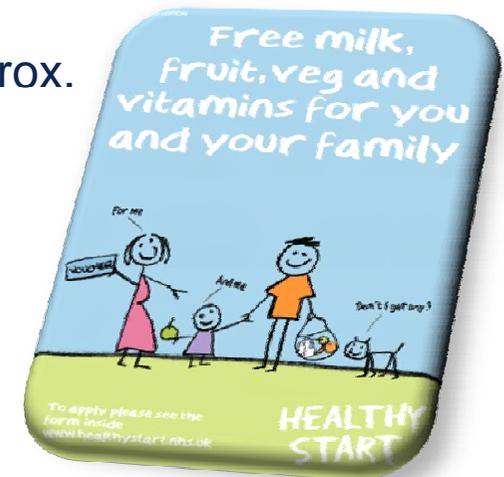
What is Healthy Start?



- Food and vitamin vouchers (£3.10 per week food vouchers)
- Low income families
- Pregnant women (from 10 weeks gestation) and children aged under 4 years

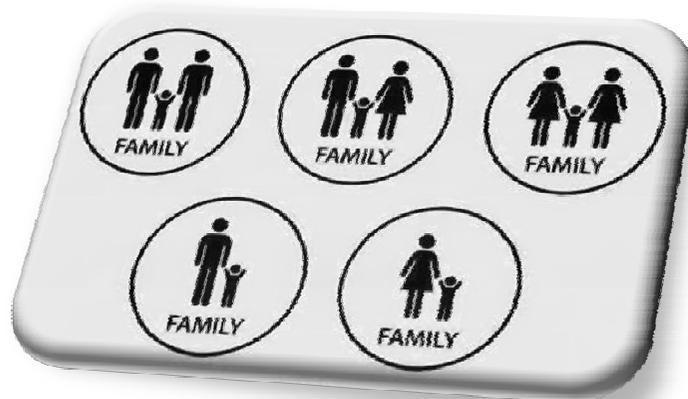
The Healthy Start Scheme in NHS Lothian

- The number of applications for the Healthy Start (HS) Scheme had fallen
 - across the UK 10,000s low income families miss out on Healthy Start food and vitamin vouchers
 - at the time of this work it was estimated that approx. 2,000 children in Lothian were missing out
- Families affected by imprisonment could potentially be one such population missing out on such support



What we did...

- HMP Edinburgh and Visitor Centre
- June – Sept 2016; spoke to 10 families and followed up with 3 families
- Gave families a supply of HS Vitamins



What we found...



- 2 families were already in receipt of HS Vouchers and/or Vitamins
 - 1 family was receiving both HS Vouchers and Vitamins
 - 1 family was only receiving the HS Vouchers
- 😊 😊

- 8 families were not in receipt of HS Vouchers or Vitamins
 - 6 families were not giving any vitamins to their children
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What we found...

- 4 families we spoke to were no longer engaging regularly with their Health Visitor
- Some families fed back that they felt it would be difficult to “...*be going back and forth...*” to get vitamins from their Health Visitor, or even the Pharmacy, due to competing demands on their time
- **All** families felt accessing vitamins for their children from the prison visitor centre would be easiest
- 2 of the families who had previously bought vitamins, found their children preferred the HS vitamins



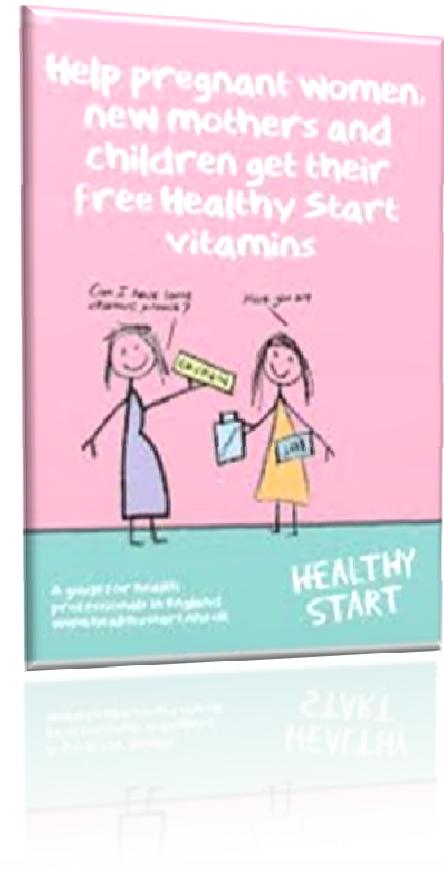
What now for Lothian?

- Tip sheet produced and information leaflets given to HMP Edinburgh Visitor Centre staff
- Information board display
- Report shared with Health Visiting Team Managers
- Agreement to now supply HS Vitamins to HMP Edinburgh Visitor Centre for distribution to all families with children aged under 4 years



Conclusions

- HS Vitamins are important – evidence shows 8% of under 5's in the UK don't have enough vitamin A in their diet, and families in lower-income groups tend to have low levels of vitamin C in their diet.
- It is recommended that infants and children aged up to 3years should be supplemented with vitamin D to achieve the recommended nutrient intakes as they are not exposed to sufficient sunlight. Cases of rickets and hypocalaemia in UK children are also on the rise, so vitamin D supplementation is essential.
- As per the evidence and our findings families affected by imprisonment are more likely to be affected by health inequalities and less likely to be giving vitamins to their children.



Recommendations

1. Support universal provision of HS Vitamins to families with children under the age of 4 who are affected by imprisonment
2. Increase awareness of the benefits of vitamins for children's health and wellbeing in this population

