



# Start for Life

Across County Durham, we want families to thrive, so we've put together what we call our Start for Life offer.

This brings together all the people who care for you and your family like those giving health care, family advice, training and fun classes.

It has useful information for parents and family members from before a baby is born through to their second birthday.

You can also visit our website  
**[www.durham.gov.uk/helpforfamilies](http://www.durham.gov.uk/helpforfamilies)**



## Before your baby arrives



**Finding out you are going to be a parent can be exciting or terrifying, or sometimes both! Whether it is your first child, or you are adding to your family, you may feel like you are stepping into a whole new world. Don't worry, we are here to support you and get you ready to welcome your new baby.**

Whether you're having a baby yourself, are the partner of a pregnant woman, or are getting ready to welcome a child into your family through surrogacy, fostering or adoption, we're here to guide you and offer emotional support and practical guidance to prepare you.

We offer courses to learn more about your little one and activities or groups that you can attend and you can find lots of our advice and support online too.

### In-person courses

You can come into our Family Hubs to do a FREE course before your baby arrives. Part of the course is about pregnancy and labour, but lots of it is about after baby arrives. It is as much for dads, partners and family or friends who support you as it is for mums. Find out more from your midwife.

### Online Courses

Our FREE online courses mean you can do them at a place and time to suit you. A popular one is **Understanding pregnancy, labour, birth and your baby**, which is for everyone in your new baby's life, be that parents-to-be, grandparents, carers, relatives or friends. This course is also available for women only couples. There are lots of other courses to help you as your child grows up too. Find them all at [www.durham.gov.uk/solihull](http://www.durham.gov.uk/solihull)

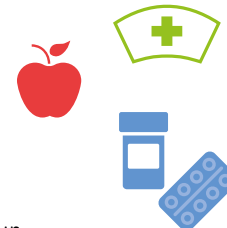
**Me, You and Baby Too** is a course designed to make things better for you, your partner, and your baby. It is for couples who have just had, or are about to have a baby. It looks at how to manage being tired and stressed when your baby arrives and how to deal with those challenges together. You can sign up at: [https://skills.oneplusone.org.uk/users/sign\\_up](https://skills.oneplusone.org.uk/users/sign_up)

## Being fit and well while pregnant

Getting some exercise, eating well and keeping up with your antenatal appointments will all help you to have a healthy pregnancy.

### You should:

- ✓ Contact a midwife as soon as you find out you're pregnant
- ✓ Stop smoking
- ✓ Stop drinking alcohol
- ✓ Eat a healthy, balanced diet
- ✓ Take folic acid daily for the first 12 weeks of your pregnancy
- ✓ Take 10 micrograms of vitamin D each day throughout your pregnancy
- ✓ Try to stay active and fit



Get more information on healthy eating and exercise during pregnancy at [www.durham.gov.uk/healthypregnancy](http://www.durham.gov.uk/healthypregnancy)

If you, or your partner, have problems with drinking or drugs, help and support is available.

Find out more at [www.durham.gov.uk/alcohol](http://www.durham.gov.uk/alcohol)



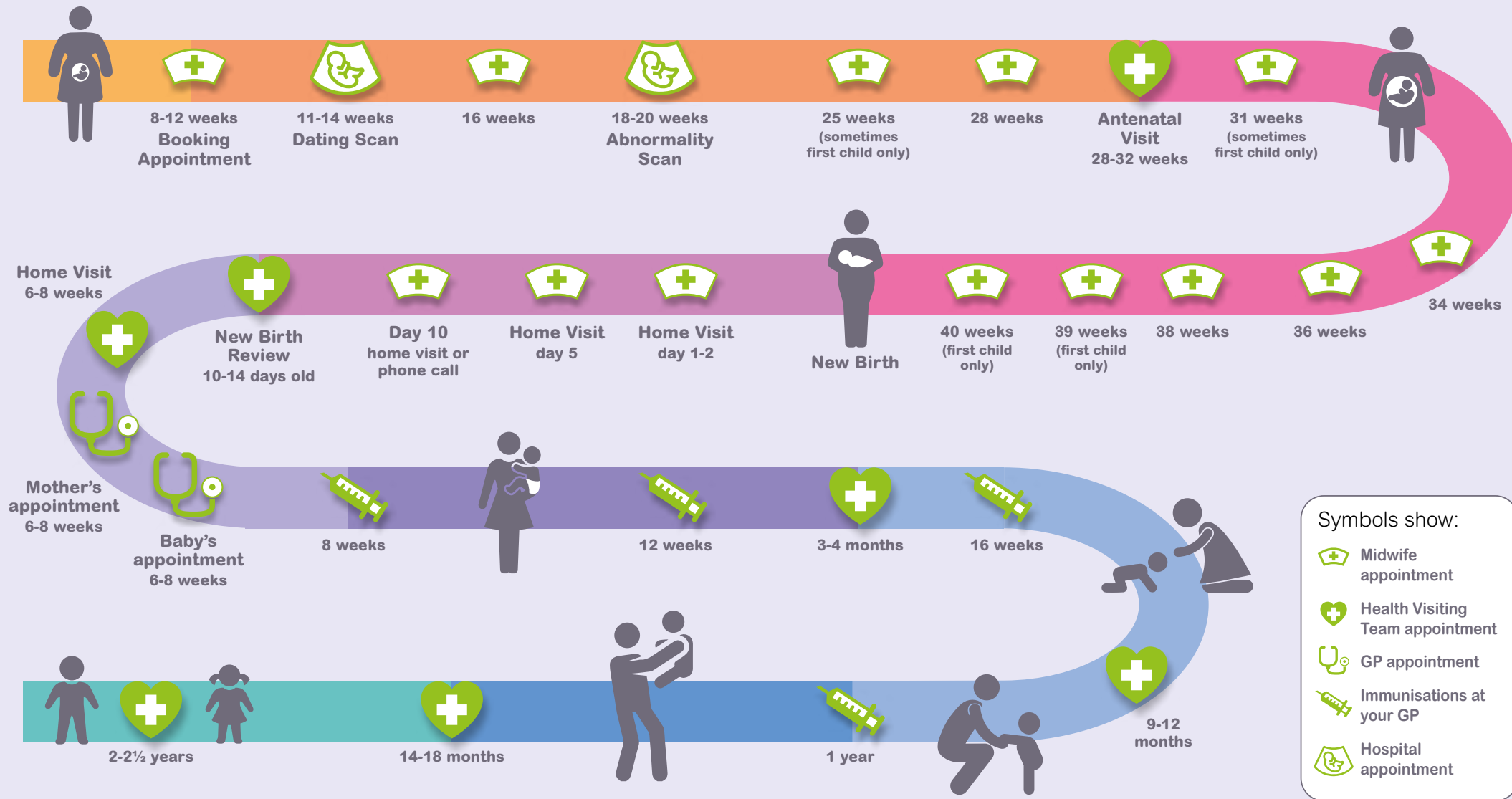
If you are experiencing domestic abuse, you can get help and support at [www.durham.gov.uk/domesticabuse](http://www.durham.gov.uk/domesticabuse)

If you are in immediate danger call **999**.

# Appointments and visits

When you find out you're pregnant, your midwife will be in touch with information and dates of future appointments.

The map below shows you the minimum number of times you can expect to meet with somebody while you are pregnant or once you have welcomed a child into your family. If you are ever concerned about your baby before or after they are born, you can contact your midwife or health visitor at any time.



## When your baby arrives

**It is a very emotional time when your baby arrives and particularly in the first few weeks this can be overwhelming for the whole family. It's common to feel like this, and the Family Hub teams are here to support you.**

Your health visiting team are also there to provide help and support. This may just be some reassurance, either over the phone or a visit, to help you and your baby while you adjust to your new family life. Nobody will judge you, so no matter how you feel don't be afraid to get in touch. You can call them on **03000 263 538**.

## Feeding your baby



### Milk

Breastfeeding gives your baby the best start in life. It has health benefits for your baby and can help you and your baby build close relationships. In Durham we have the UNICEF Baby Friendly Award.

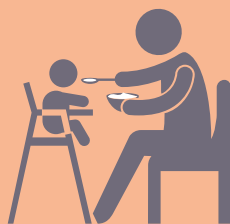
No matter how you feed your baby, we are here to help you learn how to recognise when your baby needs food and comfort. We offer really practical help in a number of ways from one-to-one support to friendly groups, ask your Family Hub for what's on offer near you.

You can also get breastfeeding support from the National Breastfeeding Helpline. Call on **0300 100 0212** from 9.30am-9.30pm every day of the year. Visit **[www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk](http://www.nationalbreastfeedinghelpline.org.uk)** to find out more.

### Moving on from milk

Get all the latest tips on what to safely start your little ones off with from first tastes to first dinners. We've got healthy recipes the whole family can enjoy and ideas to get even the fussiest of children to eat well.

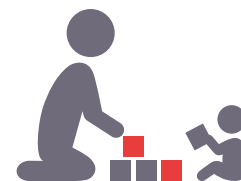
Go to **[www.durham.gov.uk/feedingandweaning](http://www.durham.gov.uk/feedingandweaning)**



## Things to do with your baby

Even with a new little person in your life, it can sometimes feel like you're all alone. So we're here to make sure you always have someone to call or somewhere to go with your baby to meet other families.

Our Family Hubs run FREE **Baby and Me** for you to attend with your child in their first year, and **Toddler and Me** for you when they are 1 and 2 years old. These are weekly sessions for you to attend and include sensory play, baby massage, songs and stories. Anyone in your child's life can come along with your child to learn more about how they are growing and developing and ways they can support this.



There are lots of activities in your local Family Hub, or you can visit **[www.countydurhamfamilies.info](http://www.countydurhamfamilies.info)** for information about activities in your community.



If your child has special educational needs and/or disabilities there is lots of help and support available.

Visit **[www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer](http://www.durham.gov.uk/localoffer)** or if you are concerned about your child's development speak to your health visitor.



## Help with money



Having a baby can be expensive. You might be able to get a grant to help with living costs and Healthy Start Vouchers to help you buy healthy food, milk and vitamins. Ask for more information in your Family Hub.

We also have lots of advice and links to support for things like childcare, benefits, heating and energy costs at **[www.durham.gov.uk/helpwithyourmoney](http://www.durham.gov.uk/helpwithyourmoney)**



## Chat to us



**/FamilyHubs** – follow our page to keep up to date and you can send us a direct message on there too



Call us on **03000 261 111**



Pop into your local Family Hub. There are 15 across the county:

- Bishop Auckland
- Brandon
- Chester-le-Street
- Consett
- Durham
- Easington
- Ferryhill
- Horden
- Newton Aycliffe
- Peterlee
- Seaham
- Stanley
- Tudhoe Moor
- Wheatley Hill
- Willington

Get full details and addresses at  
**[www.durham.gov.uk/familyhubs](http://www.durham.gov.uk/familyhubs)**

You will need to register with our Family Hubs – you can do this online or when you go into the hub.

Register online at  
**[www.durham.gov.uk/FamilyHubsRegistration](http://www.durham.gov.uk/FamilyHubsRegistration)**  
or scan here:



If you are worried about your child, or somebody else's child, contact First Contact on **03000 26 79 79**.

Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format:



Braille,



Audio,



Large print.

Email: **[altformat.familyhubs@durham.gov.uk](mailto:altformat.familyhubs@durham.gov.uk)**