

Gluten Free Products – Prescribing Guidelines

Summary

- From 1 November 2016 HaRD CCG asks GPs to stop routinely prescribing gluten free products on NHS prescriptions.
- The CCG continues to advise patients to follow a gluten free diet. Many foods are naturally free from gluten such as rice, potatoes, meat, fish, fruit and vegetables.
- Gluten free products, such as breads, are now widely available to buy, with improved choice.
- The total cost to the NHS of gluten free pasta or bread on prescription can be six to ten times the price of a similar GF product in local shops.
- The prescribing of gluten free products may be continued in exceptional circumstances, see below.

Guidance

This guidance provides information on assessing patients with exceptional circumstances who may require continued supply of gluten free products on prescription. The aim is to ensure a consistent approach is applied across HaRD CCG and limited NHS resources are used appropriately.

Exceptional circumstances include patients or children of families who are in receipt of one of the following awards:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance paid on its own or with contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance paid on its own or with contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) paid on its own or with Pension Credit (Savings Credit)
- NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate
- Universal Credit

Access to shops is rarely an issue as patients will be visiting shops (or having deliveries) for other shopping, where either gluten free products or foods naturally free in gluten will be available to buy. A busy lifestyle would also not routinely be considered a reason to need GF products on prescription.

NICE Guidance (NG20, September 15) advises that "A healthcare professional with a specialist knowledge of coeliac disease should tell people with a confirmed diagnosis of coeliac disease (and their family members or carers, where appropriate)

about the importance of a gluten-free diet and give them information to help them follow it". Patients can be referred to a dietician for additional advice and support in maintaining a GF diet.

A letter should be sent to the patient advising them about the CCG decision to remove gluten free products from prescription and exceptional criteria that should be used to identify who can continue to receive a restricted list of products. A proposed letter is included in annex 2 which practices could use. The emphasis will be on the patient to highlight to the practice whether they are in receipt of any of the awards listed.

Items should be restricted to that individual alone, in quantity (see annex 1) and product type (bread loaf or bread/flour mix only) as approved on 'NHS Drug Tariff listed' GF products.

Any individual patient that is prescribed GF products on FP10 should be reviewed every twelve months to ensure exceptional circumstances continue to apply.

The prescribing of any other GF items such as bread rolls, baguettes, nan-bread, pizza bases, wraps, cakes, biscuits, crackers, breakfast cereals is not approved by the CCG.

Patient resources

The CCG recommends that coeliac patients continue to follow a GF diet, with advice available through various patient support organisations, like Coeliac UK, on how to achieve an appropriate diet through natural and manufactured GF foods. This lifestyle management should help to reduce the risk of long-term complications associated with poor nutrition.

- <http://www.nhs.uk/Conditions/Coeliac-disease/Pages/Treatment.aspx>
- <https://www.coeliac.org.uk/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle/>
- HaRD CCG Patient Information leaflet

HaRD CCG
September 2016

Annex 1

Quantity limits

Gluten-free foods have been allocated a 'unit' value based on their carbohydrate and energy content.

1 unit is equivalent to	400g bread
2 units is equivalent to	500g bread/flour mix

The number of units prescribed per month for a patient should not exceed that defined in the following table:

AGE/SEX	SUGGESTED MONTHLY UNITS	AGE/SEX	SUGGESTED MONTHLY UNITS
Women 19 – 74	14	1 – 3 years	10
Women 75+	12	4 – 6	11
3 rd trimester of pregnancy	Add 1 unit	7 – 10	13
Breastfeeding	Add 4 units	11 – 14	15
Men 19 – 59	18	15 - 18	18
Men 60 – 74	16	Higher level of physical activity	Add 4 units
Men 75+	14		

Annex 2: Possible letter

[Practice name]

[Address]

[Tel]

[Fax]

[Email]

[Date]

Name

Address

Dear

Re: Removal of gluten free products from prescription

As you may be aware, Harrogate and Rural District CCG has taken the decision to restrict the prescribing of gluten free foods to all patients with the exception of the most vulnerable people with coeliac disease. This proposal will be introduced on the 1st November 2016 and as a result your practice will no longer be prescribing gluten free products to patients unless they fulfil one of the following exceptional criteria set out by the CCG.

This includes patients or children of families who are in receipt of one of the following awards:

- Income Support
- Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance paid on its own or with contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance paid on its own or with contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) paid on its own or with Pension Credit (Savings Credit)
- NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate
- Universal Credit

If you fall within one of the above groups, please contact the surgery, in these circumstances you will be allowed to continue to receive bread loaves or bread/flour mix only. A patient information leaflet has been attached that explains these changes.

If you have bought a prescription prepayment certificate prior to the 11th August 2016 that is still valid after 1st November 2016, you can claim a refund. Please contact hardccg.enquiries@nhs.net or 01423 799300 to request a form, this can also be downloaded from the website at <http://www.harrogateandruraldistrictccg.nhs.uk/>.

If you have any further concerns please direct them to hardccg.enquiries@nhs.net.

Yours sincerely,