

Gluten- Free Foods Available on NHS Prescriptions –Policy

December 2019

Version 2.0

DOCUMENT CONTROL

Document Location

Copies of this document can be obtained from:

Name:	Strategic Medicines Optimisation Team
Address:	Greater Manchester Joint Commissioning Team Ellen House Waddington Street Oldham OL9 6EE
Telephone:	0161 212 5680

Revision History

The latest and master version of this document is held by the GMHCC Strategic Medicines Optimisation team

REVISION DATE	ACTIONED BY	SUMMARY OF CHANGES	VERSION
08/02/2018	S Woods	Review of current GMMMG guidance (Aug 2013)	1.1
13/02/2018	S Woods	Amendments made after comments from A Pracz.	1.2
11/12/2018	S Woods	Amendments made in light of changes to ACBS list in Drug Tariff	1.3
21/02/2019	S Woods	Amendments made after comments from K. Griffiths	1.4
24/04/2019	S Woods	Amendments made in light of Coeliac UK updated guidance.	1.5
29/04/2019	S Woods	Amendment made after comments from FMESG	1.6
08/05/2019	S Woods	Draft amended for sending out to CCG Leads	1.7
31/05/2019	S Woods	Changes made after comments from CCG Leads	1.8
10/07/2019	S Woods	Final formatting after approval by PaGDSG	2.0

Approvals

This document must be approved by the following before distribution:

NAME	TITLE	DATE OF ISSUE	VERSION
GMMMG	GMMMG Members	December 2019	2.0

Distribution

This document has been distributed to:

NAME	TITLE	DATE OF ISSUE	VERSION

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Policy exclusions

Low protein foods (even if gluten free) should only be prescribed to patients with phenylketonuria and are excluded from this policy.

Background

Gluten free foods have been available on prescription to patients diagnosed with gluten sensitivity enteropathies, including coeliac disease. However, formulated and naturally gluten free foods are available in supermarkets and other food retail outlets.

Previous guidance issued by Greater Manchester Medicines Management Group recommended restricting access to gluten free bread, flour/mixes and pasta with recommendations with regard to amounts to be supplied. Gluten free biscuits, cakes (including cake mixes) and pizza bases were recommended not to be prescribed.

The Department of Health & Social Care carried out a public consultation (March to June 2017) to seek views on whether or not to make any changes to the availability of gluten free foods that can be prescribed in primary care. The health minister's preferred option was to only allow the prescribing of certain gluten free foods (i.e. bread and flour) on NHS prescriptions.

The Department of Health believes that restricting prescribing of gluten free foods will deliver savings that will be reinvested more effectively in other healthcare areas. Schedule 1 of the National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of Drugs etc.) Regulations 2004 and Part XV of the Drug Tariff have been amended, in order to implement these restrictions, and only those items listed under 'Coeliac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis' can be prescribed on FP10.

It should be noted that under the new legislation, CCGs can restrict further by selecting bread only, mixes only or can choose to end prescribing of all GF foods if they feel this is appropriate for their population, whilst taking account of their legal duties to advance equality and have regard to reducing health inequalities.

Objective

The objective of this policy is to update the current GMMMG guidance 'Gluten Free Foods Available on NHS Prescription' and to recommend appropriate quantities off this reduced list of products for prescribing by Greater Manchester prescribers on a monthly basis.

Prescribing recommendations

- Only items listed under 'Coeliac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis' in the Drug Tariff Part XV can be prescribed for patients.
- Prescriptions must be endorsed '**ACBS**' to confirm that the products are prescribed appropriately for a qualifying condition.
- Patients should be advised that the changes in access to gluten free foods reflect the outcome of the consultation carried out by the Department of Health and Social Care.
- Patients should be reminded that prescribed foods are for their own use only.
- Prescriptions should be for a maximum of one month supply at a time.
- Patients should be advised of the availability of foods that are naturally gluten free.

Quantities

Table 1 illustrates the number of units in each gluten free product.

Table 2 must be used to guide the amount of units that patients receive each month. If patients request larger quantities then they should be advised to buy additional gluten free products, and reminded of the need for a balanced diet.

Table 1: Number of units in each prescribable gluten free food item

Prescribable food item	Number of units
400g bread/rolls/baguettes	1
500g bread mix/flour mix	2

Table 2: Monthly gluten free food on prescription maximum requirement

Age group	Suggested number of units/month ¹
Child under 10 years	8
Children 11 – 18 years	12
Female 19 years and older	8
Male 19 years and older	12

Prescribers should use their clinical judgement when prescribing and take energy requirements into account. Other factors can increase energy (and therefore carbohydrate) requirements, for example malnourished people with increased energy requirements, increased requirements during pregnancy and breastfeeding and high activity levels. Patients should also obtain part of any increased requirement for carbohydrates from naturally gluten free sources, bearing in mind that gluten free bread contains high levels of fat and salt⁴.

Prescribers should take these factors into account when deciding on appropriate quantities to prescribe and should seek advice from a dietitian if unsure of requirements.

References

1. National Prescribing Guidelines (Coeliac UK). <https://www.coeliac.org.uk/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle/prescriptions/national-prescribing-guidelines/> accessed 24th April 2019.
2. Prescribing Gluten-free Foods in Primary Care: Guidance for CCGs (28 Nov 2018). <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/prescribing-gluten-free-foods-in-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs/> accessed 11th February 2019.
3. NHS Electronic Drug Tariff <https://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/pharmacies-gp-practices-and-appliance-contractors/drug-tariff> accessed 11th February 2019.
4. Breads Survey 2013. Action on Salt. <http://www.actiononsalt.org.uk/salt-surveys/2013/breads-survey/> accessed 7th May 2019.