

Guidelines for the supply of Gluten-free products in Darlington, Durham Dales Easington and Sedgefield (DDES) and North Durham CCGs

Practices should:

1. Prescribe gluten-free foods only to patients with a **confirmed diagnosis** of gluten-sensitive enteropathies, including steatorrhoea due to gluten sensitivity, coeliac disease, and dermatitis herpetiformis
2. Prescribe no more than the quantities recommended by this guidance (see table 1).
3. Prescribe only the approved staple products of bread and flour (see table 2)
4. Prescribe products that do not have a delivery surcharge (see table 3)

Patients should be advised to purchase other products, but should bear in mind advice given with respect to a healthy diet.

1. Recommended number of units per month

Table 1

Age group		Recommended number of units per month
Male	19 – 59 years	8 units* e.g. 8 x 400g bread/rolls (or 4 x 500g mix suitable for making bread)
	60 - 74 years	
	75+ years	
Female	19 - 74 years	6 units* e.g. 6 x 400g bread/rolls (or 3 x 500g mix suitable for making bread)
	75+ years	
	Breastfeeding	Add 4 units*
	3 rd trimester pregnancy	Add 1 unit*
High Physical Activity Level		No additional units
Child	1 – 3 years	6 units* 6 x 400g bread (or 3 x 500g mix suitable for making bread)
	4 – 6 years	
	7 - 10 years	8 units* 8 x 400g bread (or 4 x 500g mix suitable for making bread)
	11 - 14 years	
	15 – 18 years	

*Where:

1 unit is equivalent to 400g bread/rolls

2 units is equivalent to 500g flour mix

2. Staple foods

National guidance only allows for certain gluten free (GF) foods to be prescribed at NHS expense, these are:

- Approved gluten free bread products
- Approved gluten-free mixes

For a full list of approved products see table 2.

3. General advice

- Patients should be encouraged to eat natural gluten-free foods as part of their balanced diet. These include:
 - Rice and potatoes, oats, beans and some cereals
 - Fruit, vegetables and nuts
 - Meat, poultry, dairy, fish and seafood
- Stop smoking
- Reduce alcohol intake
- Increase physical activity
- Dietary advice is available from Coeliac UK: <https://www.coeliac.org.uk/home/>

Background evidence and rationale

Patients eligible to be prescribed gluten-free products

- Gluten-free products have ACBS (advisory committee on Borderline Substances) approval on the basis they may be regarded as drugs for the purpose of prescribing, only for management of the specified conditions listed in the BNF appendix 2, allowing them to be prescribed at NHS expense for patients with:
 - established coeliac disease
 - dermatitis herpetiformis
 - steatorrhoea due to gluten sensitivity
- **Gluten-free products must NOT be prescribed on FP10 to patients with other conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, wheat intolerance or Asperger's Syndrome that do not have ACBS approval. Any prescribing of these products for these indications should be stopped**
- Patients with positive blood results and those with negative antibodies who are suspected as having coeliac disease should be referred to a gastroenterologist for formal diagnosis prior to commencing a GF diet
- A small bowel biopsy is the gold standard for diagnosis of coeliac disease¹
- NICE guidance on coeliac disease (NG20) outlines the symptoms and patients at risk of coeliac disease as well as evidence on how to identify people with the condition².

Prescribing requirements for NHS supply

- Gluten-free staple items such as bread and flour were first made available on NHS prescription in the late 1960s. At this time there was limited access to a small number of products other than via prescription
- Since then, due to the growing market for gluten-free foods, there is a wide and expanding range of gluten-free products which are readily available in supermarkets. As a result prices of products that were previously very high are now much more comparable to their gluten-containing equivalent.
- In March 2017 the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) consulted stakeholders on the continued provision of GF food on NHS prescription based on the above rationale. The resulting guidance finalised in 2018 limits prescribing of GF products to certain breads and mixes
- This guidance is intended to ensure patients with confirmed disease are able to receive staple products whilst acknowledging that the price differential between gluten-free and equivalent gluten containing products is now lower than it ever has been. The provision of 6-8 units per month is intended to supplement patients to the value of this differential, rather than provide full quantities at NHS expense that are outlined in Coeliac UK's National Prescribing Guidelines for GF food on NHS Prescription.
- It is also not equitable that some patients are able to receive significant amounts of food on NHS prescription, whilst others who also have special dietary needs, are not. It is reasonable to expect coeliac patients should purchase the remainder of gluten-free foods they require themselves.
- Supply of GF products is now restricted to the list of bread and flour mixes in table 2. Obtain fresh bread only from suppliers that do not add surcharges

Quantities of GF products to be supplied

- The list of products able to be prescribed is contained in the NHS Drug Tariff³ which has been reproduced as table 2. This information is also available on the Coeliac UK website⁴.
- Ensure prescribed quantities do not exceed 6-8 units per month of bread or flour (see table 1).
- Other products such as pasta, cereals, pizza bases, sweet biscuits and cakes CANNOT be prescribed under any circumstances. These products should be purchased by the patient.
- Prescriptions should generally be issued monthly, for appropriate maximum quantities of 'staple' food items required by the patient, not exceeding the recommendations in the table above.
- Patient choice of 'staple' products should be restricted to within cost-effective products, i.e. those that do not attract delivery surcharges by suppliers.

¹ [Abdulkarim AS & Murray JA \(2003\) Review article: the diagnosis of coeliac disease. *Alimentary Pharmacology and Therapeutics*. 17: 987-995.](#)

² [NICE guideline NG20 Coeliac Disease \(2015\)](#)

³ [NHS Business Services Authority Drug Tariff](#)

⁴ [Coeliac UK website](#)

Putting these guidelines into practice

It is acknowledged that this guideline represents a significant change in provision of gluten-free products on NHS prescription, and that there may be some work involved for practices when implementing the new recommendations.

1. Confirm all patients that are prescribed gluten-free products have a diagnosis of coeliac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis. This should be confirmed by duodenal biopsy or positive coeliac serology, or a consultant gastroenterologist. Under ACBS regulations NHS prescribing of GF foods for other indications is not permitted
2. Communicate the new monthly quantities and approved products to eligible patients and cease prescribing to patients that do not have a diagnosis.
3. Amend patients' repeat prescriptions to only the products in table 2 and quantities outlined in table 1 whilst offering patients a choice of product. Practices should be mindful of the extra charges that may be incurred by suppliers. Prescribing of cakes, cake mixes, biscuits, cereals, pizza bases, pasta and crackers is no longer permitted on NHS prescription .
4. Consider issuing prescriptions for one-month supply only. The shelf-life of products varies considerably and some products are difficult to store. Practices should consider carefully the quantity of each product that is given on prescription. Some products such as bread can be frozen, however their palatability may be affected depending on the length of time that they are frozen.
5. Patients who pay for prescriptions can apply for a prescription pre-payment certificate
6. All patients with coeliac disease should be assessed by a dietician at the point of diagnosis
7. Patients are advised to have an annual review with the consultant, GP or dietician.

Table 2: List of products available at NHS expense

It is important to ensure that all products supplied at NHS expense are readily available from local wholesalers or by ordering direct from the manufacturer as ordering lines that are not normally stocked at wholesalers may incur handling or carriage charges (which are charged to NHS budgets). GP practices and community pharmacies should work closely together so that extra charges are kept to a minimum.

Barkat gluten-free all purpose flour mix	Barkat gluten-free brown rice bread
Barkat gluten-free hi-fibre bread mix	Barkat gluten-free par-baked baguettes
Barkat gluten-free par-baked rolls	Barkat gluten-free par-baked white bread sliced
Barkat gluten-free wheat free multigrain rice bread	Barkat gluten-free white rice bread
Barkat gluten-free wholemeal sliced bread	Ener-G gluten-free brown rice bread
Ener-G gluten-free dinner rolls	Ener-G gluten-free rice loaf
Ener-G gluten-free Seattle brown loaf	Ener-G gluten-free tapioca bread
Ener-G gluten-free white rice bread	Finax gluten-free coarse flour mix
Finax gluten-free fibre bread mix	Finax gluten-free flour mix
Genius gluten-free brown sandwich bread sliced	Genius gluten-free seeded brown farmhouse loaf sliced
Genius gluten-free white sandwich bread sliced	Glutafin gluten-free 4 white rolls
Glutafin gluten-free baguettes	Glutafin gluten-free bread mix 32
Glutafin gluten-free fibre bread mix	Glutafin gluten-free fibre loaf sliced
Glutafin gluten-free high fibre loaf sliced	Glutafin gluten-free multipurpose white mix
Glutafin gluten-free part-baked 2 long white rolls	Glutafin gluten-free part-baked 4 fibre rolls
Glutafin gluten-free part-baked 4 white rolls	Glutafin gluten-free Select bread mix
Glutafin gluten-free Select fibre bread mix	Glutafin gluten-free Select fibre loaf sliced
Glutafin gluten-free Select fresh brown loaf sliced	Glutafin gluten-free Select fresh seeded loaf sliced
Glutafin gluten-free Select fresh white loaf sliced	Glutafin gluten-free Select multipurpose fibre mix
Glutafin gluten-free Select multipurpose white mix	Glutafin gluten-free Select seeded loaf sliced
Glutafin gluten-free Select white loaf sliced	Glutafin gluten-free wheat-free fibre mix
Glutafin gluten-free white loaf sliced	Glutenex gluten-free white bread mix
Innovative Solutions gluten-free bakery blend	Just: gluten-free good white bread sliced
Just: gluten-free good white rolls	Just: gluten-free white sandwich bread
Juvela gluten-free bread rolls	Juvela gluten-free fibre bread rolls
Juvela gluten-free fibre loaf sliced	Juvela gluten-free fibre loaf unsliced
Juvela gluten-free fibre mix	Juvela gluten-free fresh fibre loaf sliced
Juvela gluten-free fresh fibre rolls	Juvela gluten-free fresh white loaf sliced
Juvela gluten-free fresh white rolls	Juvela gluten-free harvest mix
Juvela gluten-free loaf sliced	Juvela gluten-free loaf unsliced
Juvela gluten-free mix	Juvela gluten-free part-baked fibre bread rolls
Juvela gluten-free part-baked fibre loaf	Juvela gluten-free part-baked loaf
Juvela gluten-free part-baked white bread rolls	Lifestyle gluten-free brown bread
Lifestyle gluten-free brown bread rolls	Lifestyle gluten-free high fibre bread rolls
Lifestyle gluten-free white bread rolls	Mums Mill gluten-free quick bread mix
Proceli basic mix	Proceli gluten free part-baked baguettes
Tobia Brown Teff Bread Mix	Tobia White Teff Bread Mix
Tritamyl gluten-free brown bread mix	Tritamyl gluten-free flour mix
Tritamyl gluten-free white bread mix	Warburtons gluten free brown bread sliced
Warburtons gluten free brown rolls	Warburtons gluten free white bread sliced
Warburtons gluten free white rolls	

Table 3 List of manufacturers of fresh gluten-free bread products that are available with no delivery charges

Company	Ordering arrangement	Telephone no.
Genius - Fresh bread only	No charge if ordered directly from (via Alliance wholesalers)	0845 8744 000
Juvela – Fresh bread only	Available from UDG with no delivery charge.	01773 510123
Glutafin	Available from UDG with no delivery charge	01773 510123
Warburtons	Available from UDG with no delivery charge	01773 510123

Where minimum orders apply, prescribers must ensure they prescribe at least the minimum order quantity. A two month prescription may be issued if necessary. Please note fresh loaves can be frozen. Your practice pharmacist can assist if necessary.