

Guidelines for the supply of gluten-free products in County Durham CCG and Tees Valley CCG

Practices should:

1. Prescribe gluten-free (GF) foods only to patients with a **confirmed diagnosis** of gluten-sensitive enteropathies, including coeliac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis. Gluten-free products must not be prescribed on the NHS for patients with other conditions such as irritable bowel syndrome, wheat intolerance, Asperger's Syndrome or other conditions that do not have ACBS approval.
2. Prescribe no more than the quantities recommended by this guidance (see table 1). Prescriptions should generally be issued monthly.
3. Prescribe only the approved staple products of bread and flour (see [NHS BSA Drug Tariff](#)). Other products such as pasta, cereals, pizza bases, sweet biscuits and cakes should not be prescribed under any circumstances and should be purchased by the patient.
4. Prescribe products that do not have a delivery surcharge (see table 3)
5. Offer patients an annual review with the consultant, GP or dietician, as well as general advice on smoking cessation, limiting alcohol intake, physical activity and a balanced and healthy diet. Key nutrients to be included in the diet are fibre, iron and calcium, and some GF products are fortified.

Natural gluten-free foods include:

- o Rice, potatoes, oats, pulses (peas, beans and lentils) and some cereals
- o Fruit, vegetables, nuts and seeds
- o Meat, poultry, dairy, fish and seafood

Further dietary advice is available from Coeliac UK: www.coeliac.org.uk

This guidance, based on [NHS England Guidance 2018](#), 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 has ever been. The recommended provision of 6-8 units of approved GF bread products or mixes per month on the NHS is intended to supplement patients to the value of this differential, rather than to provide the full quantities that are outlined in [Coeliac UK's National Prescribing Guidelines](#) for GF food on NHS prescription.

Table 1: Recommended number of units per month that may be provided on NHS prescription

	Age group	Recommended number of units* per month
Child	1-3 years	6
	4-6 years	6
	7-10 years	8
	11-14 years	8
	15-18 years	8
Male	19-59 years	8
	60-74 years	8
	75+ years	8
Female	19-74 years	8
	breastfeeding	Add 4 units, i.e. total 12 units
	3 rd trimester pregnancy	Add 1 unit, i.e. total 9 units
	75+ years	6

*400g bread/rolls/baguettes = 1 unit, or 500g bread/flour mix = 2 units, i.e. if recommendation 6 units per month, then can prescribe 6x 400g bread/rolls or 3x 500g flour mix suitable for making bread

Please note that, although a number of factors may increase energy (and therefore carbohydrate) requirements, for example high activity levels or increased energy requirements in malnourished people. These do not affect the number of units that may be prescribed on the NHS, with the exception of pregnancy (3rd trimester) and breastfeeding.

Products available at NHS expense

The list of gluten-free products that may be prescribed on the NHS can be found in the [NHS BSA Drug Tariff](#) Part XV. This list is also available on the Coeliac UK website.

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.

Table 2: List of manufacturers of fresh gluten-free bread products that are available without 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.