

Gluten Free Foods supply on the NHS

Released: 18th Jan 2019

Instruction

NHS England regulations allow for only gluten-free bread and gluten-free food mixes to be prescribed at NHS expense.

Recommendation

NHS Liverpool CCG recommends the supply of gluten-free bread and gluten-free mixes, **in the quantities described below**, and only for indications approved by the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances (ACBS).

ACBS indications: established gluten-sensitive enteropathies including steatorrhoea due to gluten sensitivity, coeliac disease, and dermatitis herpetiformis¹.

Prescribing for Gluten Free Foods

Following the change to the prescribing regulations in England only gluten-free bread and gluten-free food mixes are to be prescribed at NHS expense. GPs must not prescribe any other gluten free, or very low gluten food, and pharmacies will not dispense them.

Patients who wish to include other gluten free food products in their diet should be advised to purchase them from supermarkets, health food shops or pharmacies.

The Medicines Optimisation Committee recommends that each supply of GF foods should be for ONE month only. Generally, fresh gluten free bread is available in cases of 8 x 400g and, due to its short shelf life, patients should be advised to freeze surplus quantities as the bread deteriorates rapidly if stored at room temperature. Alternatively, flour mixes can also be used to make bread.

The table below shows recommended monthly units to be prescribed in normal circumstances. Additional amounts can be added for high activity levels and these units should be assessed on individual basis by a clinician or registered dietitian if necessary.

Number of units in each prescribed gluten free food item:

- 400g bread/rolls/baguettes – 1 unit
- 500g bread/flour mix – 2 units

Age Group	Monthly prescribed units of bread / flour mix
Child 1-3 years	6
Child 4-6 years	6
Child 7-10 years	8
Child 11-14 years	8
Child 15-18 years	8
Male 19-59	8

¹ <https://bnf.nice.org.uk/borderline-substance-taxonomy/gluten-free-foods.html>

Male 60-74	8
Male 75+ years	8
Female 19-74	8
Female 75+	6
Breastfeeding	9
3 rd trimester pregnancy	8

Source - Coeliac UK prescribing guide (p12)

Patients should also be reminded that prescribed foods are for their own use only, and not for family or friends.

References

NHS England prescription of drugs regulations – Amendment

https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1134/pdfs/uksi_20181134_en.pdf

Coeliac UK et al. Gluten-free foods: a revised prescribing guide 2011. Updated 2012 (accessed on 20/12/2018):

<https://www.coeliac.org.uk/document-library/378-gluten-free-foods-a-revised-prescribing-guide/?return=/healthcare-professionals/resources/guidance-documents/>