

## Information leaflet on gluten-free products

### What's changing?

People in Hertfordshire with coeliac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis will no longer be prescribed gluten-free foods like bread, pasta and flour mixes.

### Does this change affect everyone?

The new policy applies to everyone, including those who get free prescriptions. Clinical exceptions are for people with a learning disability who do not have a carer to help them manage their diet or people with safeguarding concerns.

### Why will gluten-free foods no longer be prescribed?

We reviewed and updated our policy for prescribing gluten-free foods after a consultation in the summer (July to September 2017) on a proposal to stop these foods being prescribed. The vast majority of people who responded to our consultation supported the proposal.

This new policy is part of a package of measures we are taking to help make best use of NHS resources. Gluten-free foods can be bought easily without a prescription from most pharmacies and supermarkets.

### Are gluten-free products that I buy in shops and online the same quality as those on prescription?

Yes – by law foods can only be labelled gluten-free if they have extremely low levels of gluten. The label is a sign that these foods are suitable for a gluten-free diet and will be of similar quality to the products the NHS has been buying.

### I cannot afford to buy gluten-free foods as I am on a low income. How will the change affect me?

Patients on a low income will no longer get gluten-free foods on prescription because this policy applies to everyone living in Hertfordshire, including those who get free prescriptions. This includes:

- People with a medical or maternity exemption
- Children under 16 and adults over 60
- People receiving income-related support

You can access a *Gluten-free diet on a budget leaflet* from Coeliac UK's website: [www.coeliac.org.uk/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle/food-shopping/gluten-free-diet-on-a-budget/](http://www.coeliac.org.uk/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle/food-shopping/gluten-free-diet-on-a-budget/). Further information and advice is also available from NHS Choices at [www.nhs.uk/conditions/Coeliac-disease/](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Coeliac-disease/)

**If I can no longer get gluten-free foods on prescription how will I manage my coeliac disease?**

You can manage coeliac disease by excluding foods from your diet that contain gluten. Gluten is a protein that's found in wheat, rye and barley for example. There are plenty of foods that don't contain gluten.

Further information and advice about following a gluten-free diet is available on the NHS choices website at [www.nhs.uk](http://www.nhs.uk) and from Coeliac UK's website [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk).

**Which foods are naturally gluten-free?**

There are a wide variety of foods which you can eat that are naturally gluten-free such as fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, fresh meat, fresh fish, fresh poultry, eggs, milk, rice, fresh potatoes, pulses and beans.

**Where can I buy gluten-free products?**

Most supermarkets sell gluten-free foods at competitive prices in-store and online. You can also buy pharmacy-only brands from pharmacies without a prescription.

**Where can I get support?**

Patients with coeliac disease are entitled to request an annual review with their GP. Coeliac UK offers excellent support for patients who need to adhere to a gluten-free diet by helping you to manage your diet and keep up-to-date with the latest developments. Visit their website at [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) or contact the local group at [southherts@coeliac.org.uk](mailto:southherts@coeliac.org.uk).

**How will this policy change affect people who have coeliac-type symptoms but have not yet been tested or diagnosed?**

Gluten-free foods have only been available on prescription for people who had a confirmed diagnosis of coeliac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis.

For more information you can contact us on [hvccgpatientfeedback@nhs.net](mailto:hvccgpatientfeedback@nhs.net), 01442 898865 or visit our website [www.hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk](http://www.hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk).

<b>Version</b>	1.0
<b>Developed by</b>	Pharmaceutical Advisor, HVCCG Pharmacy & Medicines Optimisation Team with acknowledgement to Coeliac UK, East Lancashire CCG, Northern, Eastern and Western Devon CCG
<b>Ratified by</b>	November 2017 (Medicines Optimisation Clinical Leads group); November 2017 (Primary Care Commissioning Committee)
<b>Review date</b>	November 2020