

Gluten Free Policy

VERSION CONTROL

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VERSION HISTORY

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1.0 Policy Statement

Coventry & Rugby and Warwickshire North CCGs will only commission or fund a limited list (see Appendix 1) of gluten free bread and gluten free mix on the NHS for all patients with established coeliac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis. Prescribing is limited to 8-10 units per month.

2.0 Scope of Policy

2.1 This policy applies to all services contracted by or delivered by the NHS in Coventry & Rugby and Warwickshire North CCGs including:

GP practices
Out of hours and extended hours providers
Acute Hospitals
Outpatient clinics
NHS community providers
Independent providers
Community pharmacy

2.2 This policy applies to all prescribers within the contracted services; general practitioners, locum and junior doctors, trainees and community practitioners, supplementary and independent non-medical prescribers within Coventry & Rugby and Warwickshire North CCGs.

2.3 This policy applies to:

All patients registered with or attending a healthcare appointment in Coventry & Rugby and Warwickshire North CCGs.
All patients, whether or not they pay for their prescriptions.

3.0 Background

3.1 Coventry & Rugby and Warwickshire North CCGs currently spend approximately a combined £330k annually on the prescribing of gluten free (GF) food.

3.2 Coeliac disease is a common digestive condition where a person has an adverse reaction to gluten. Eating foods containing gluten can trigger a range of symptoms, such as:

- Diarrhoea, which may smell particularly unpleasant
- Bloating and flatulence (passing wind)
- Abdominal pain
- Weight loss
- Feeling tired all the time as a result of malnutrition (not getting enough nutrients from food)
- Children not growing at the expected rate.

3.3 GF foods are available in supermarkets with a wide variety of choice. Alternatively coeliac patients can alter their diet to replace bread with naturally gluten-free foods e.g. rice, potato. GF food is expensive when obtained via NHS prescription because of clinician time and dispensing costs including out of pocket expenses (e.g. special delivery charges).

3.4 Both CCGs have decided to follow the recommendations from the report published by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on Thursday 1 February 2018 and the health minister's preferred option to restrict prescribing to certain gluten-free products (bread and mix). The report follows the DHSC's own consultation which considered the availability of gluten free food on prescription in primary care.

Appendix 1

List of gluten free products available on NHS prescription:

Bread

Brands: Ener-G
Genius
Glutafin
Juvela
Warburtons

Mix

Brands: Glutafin
Juvela

The above brands currently represent approximately 95% of items currently prescribed in each CCG.