

Patient advice Gluten free products

This leaflet explains changes to the availability of gluten free products on NHS prescription across Harrogate and Rural District areas.



**For more information
contact your local
pharmacy or GP surgery**

*This leaflet can be made available
in other formats. Please call
01423 799300 or email
hardccg.enquiries@nhs.net*

Other useful tips on avoiding gluten

Home cooking is best. You know exactly what has gone into what you are eating.

Carefully check the labelling on any foods purchased. Many items may not appear to contain gluten but it is often present in items such as gravy, ketchup and sausages.

Legislation states that all allergens must be clearly listed on food labels which include gluten containing cereals. This is a requirement for caterers eg restaurants.

Coeliac UK, an organisation supporting coeliac patients, provides useful information on all aspects of the disease, including a directory of gluten free foods and drinks: www.coeliac.org.uk

Harrogate hospital dietetic department can provide specific guidance relating to GF diet

Tel 01423 553329

What is coeliac disease?

Coeliac disease is not an allergy or food intolerance. It is an autoimmune disease triggered by a protein called gluten, which is found in wheat, barley and rye.

Eating gluten causes the body to respond by attacking the gluten in the small intestine, causing damage to it.

What signs and symptoms do people with coeliac disease experience?

Symptoms range from mild to severe but commonly include bloating, excess wind, abdominal pain, constipation and/or diarrhea and weight loss. Other symptoms include chronic fatigue (due to anaemia), headaches, mouth ulcers, skin problems, depression and infertility. People with untreated coeliac disease are more likely to develop osteoporosis, certain rare kinds of gastrointestinal cancer and other autoimmune disorders.

What is NHS Harrogate and Rural District CCG?

The clinical commissioning group (CCG) is responsible for the planning and purchasing of the vast majority of health services across the area - this includes hospital care, mental health and community services.

It works closely with all 17 GP practices across Harrogate and Rural District areas.

Contact us:

<http://www.harrogateandruraldistrictccg.nhs.uk/>

Telephone: 01423 799300

Address: Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group, 1 Grimbald Crag Court St James Business Park, Knaresborough. HG5 8QB

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Why patients will no longer be routinely prescribed gluten free products?

In August 2016, a decision was taken by NHS Harrogate and Rural District Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to stop funding the prescription of gluten free foods to all patients, apart from those in exceptional circumstances.

Changes were introduced to patients and prescribers (GPs and pharmacists) from 1 November 2016.

Why was this decision made?

The CCG decided to stop funding gluten free foods on prescription because gluten free foods are now much more widely available with increased quality and variety. The CCG has to make the best use of limited NHS resources.

In exceptional circumstances some patients will continue to be allowed to receive gluten free products on prescription. GPs and pharmacists have been provided with advice to help identify those patients.

Which patients would be considered in an 'exceptional circumstance'?

In exceptional circumstances, patients can continue to receive gluten free products on prescription.

Exceptional circumstances would include patients or children of families who are in receipt of either Income Support, Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income-related Employment and Support

Allowance paid on its own or with contribution-based Employment and Support Allowance, Pension Credit (Guarantee Credit) paid on its own or with Pension Credit (Savings Credit), NHS Tax Credit Exemption Certificate, Universal Credit

The prescription will be limited to bread loaves or bread/flour mix only.

What if patients can't get a supply of gluten free products locally?

From market testing, the CCG is assured of a good geographical spread of retail outlets across our locality, with a wide variety and price competitive choice of gluten free products for self-purchase.

What if patients can't afford to pay for these products from the supermarket?

We appreciate that the price of some gluten free products are sometimes more expensive than non-gluten free products. However the price difference is not as wide as some older references suggest.

This is thought to be due to the increasing demand for these products, with more people following a gluten free diet and greater engagement from supermarkets and manufacturers.

The price of standard retail gluten free products is now considered affordable, although the CCG appreciates, it may be less affordable to some of our patients.

Were other options considered before the CCG made the decision?

Previous attempts to reduce quantities and products available on prescription were found to have a limited effect on CCG spending using NHS funds.

A supermarket voucher scheme was considered, but it would have involved expensive processing fees for both suppliers and the NHS, therefore limiting the potential cost savings.

What if patients have to stop following a gluten free diet?

If a patient has been diagnosed with coeliac disease, they must continue to follow a strict gluten free diet.

We recommend sticking to foods that are naturally gluten free rather than specialist products that have been manufactured to be gluten free.

Rice and potatoes are examples of foods that are naturally gluten free that can also be cheap to purchase. It remains important to have a well-balanced diet.

Coeliac UK produces a helpful food and drink directory, which is available free to members (or £10 to non-members). Following the Eatwell Guide model for balanced eating will provide a gluten free diet without need for any specialist dietary foods. This encourages choosing naturally gluten free carbohydrate containing foods as part of a healthy, balanced diet.