Certain gluten free foods are available on prescription for all patients who are diagnosed with Coeliac Disease or another gluten enteropathy (disease of the intestinal tract).

The symptoms of Coeliac Disease are kept under control by eating a strict gluten free diet.

This leaflet explains the changes to the prescribing of gluten free products in NHS Hounslow and Hounslow Clinical Commissioning Group.

**Why has the process changed?**

A local review of the prescribing of gluten free foods has been carried out. This process showed that patients did not have equal access to gluten free food. The Coeliac Society Guidelines gives information on the quantity of food available on prescription each month and the types of foods available on prescription.

**What does this mean for me?**

Patients who have Coeliac Disease or other gluten enteropathy diagnosed by a specialist can be prescribed the number of units recommended by Coeliac UK every month. The number of units each month is shown in the table below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Age and sex** | **Number of units** | **One Unit is**  **equivalent to**  **one item of:** |
| child 1-3 years | 10 | 400g bread  400g rolls / Baguettes  250g bread /flour mix  200g crackers  /plain biscuits  250g pasta  2 pizza bases |
| child 4-6 years | 11 |
| child 7-10 years | 13 |
| child 11-14 years | 15 |
| child 15-18 years | 18 |
| male 19-59 years | 18 |
| male 60-74 years | 16 |
| male 75+ years | 14 |
| female 19-74 years | 14 |
| female 75+ years | 12 |
| breastfeeding | add 4 |
| 3rd trimester pregnancy | add 1 |
| high physical  activity level | add 4 |

**Types of gluten free food available on prescription**

A key issue is the prescribing of gluten-free cake mix and sweet biscuits. It is difficult to put forward a strong argument to support these items on prescription as these products are now widely available in shops and are not thought essential to the diet. They are also contrary to the NHS policy about healthy eating.

**Naturally gluten free foods**

* Most dairy products e.g. cheese, butter, milk and eggs
* Fruit and vegetables
* Meat and fish (although not breaded or marinated)
* Potatoes
* Rice
* Flours made from rice, corn, soy, chickpeas (gram flour), buckwheat and potato
* Crackers made from rice or corn
* Other grains such as millet, quinoa and buckwheat

You may find that if you enjoy the foods in the list above, you may not need the recommended quantities of gluten free food on prescription.

**How will I obtain other items?**

All the supermarkets now stock a good range of gluten free food. This range is constantly improving and patients are encouraged to purchase any other gluten free foods that they require.

**Points to remember**

* You will continue to get basic foods recommended by the Coeliac Society and the Department of Health on prescription
* You can continue to buy gluten free products that are not recommended to be prescribed
* There are many natural foods that are gluten free and can be included in your diet

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**Further Information**

Regular review is important as dietary needs vary throughout life. You will continue to have medical reviews with your GP.

More information can be found at:-

[www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)

Local pharmacies offer free NHS services that help you get the greatest possible benefit from your prescribed medicines. If you have been prescribed a new or different medicine for certain long term illnesses (such as asthma, diabetes or high blood pressure), or if you want to know more about your regular prescription medicines, your pharmacist will be happy to advise you or arrange a review meeting.

PRACTICE STAMP

**Getting value out of the medicines you need**

Acknowledgment to NHS Wirral

 

**Prescribing Gluten**

**Free Foods**

**A Guide for Patients**

**Chan**

