

Recommendations for Gluten Free Prescribing

Main Document Information	
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Who is suitable for gluten free products on prescription?

Patients with **confirmed diagnosis** of:

- coeliac disease / confirmed gluten-sensitive enteropathies or
- dermatitis herpetiformis.

Recommended Gluten Free Products AVAILABLE to prescribe

The TNW CCGs will follow the recommendations outlined in the Department of Health guidance on the prescribing of gluten free items (1) which recommends retaining a limited range of bread and mix products on prescription. This means ***Gluten Free foods from the following categories will no longer be recommended for prescribing in Tower Hamlets CCG***; biscuits, cereals, cooking aids, grains/flours and pasta.

The Department of Health guidance was agreed with Coeliac UK and a copy of their press release is available [here](#)

[Table 1](#) below outlines the recommended maximum number of bread, bread mix/flour or combination that should be prescribed per patient each month. A breakdown of number of units for bread and bread mix/flour is provided in [Table 2](#) . This follows the recommended units of bread/bread mix/flour per month in the [National Prescribing Guidelines](#) but should form part of a balanced diet of staple items.

Table 1 Recommended Maximum Number of Units of bread, bread mix/flour or combination to be prescribed on a monthly basis

Age and sex	Number of units
Child 1-3 years	10
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

Table 2 Unit Definition for Gluten Free bread or bread mix/flour

Formulary gluten-free products	Prescription Units
400g bread	1
500g bread mix / flour mix	2

Additional units are not routinely recommended but **individual patient needs require consideration**. There may be exceptional circumstances where prescriptions for more items would be appropriate e.g. malnourished patients. These guidelines are not intended to replace specialist advice or clinical management. They are designed to offer guidance on prescribing practice only.

Advice to patients

- Bread / bread mix/flour available on prescription should be included as part of a balanced diet of gluten free foods. Advice on achieving a balanced diet can be found at [Coeliac UK](https://www.coeliacuk.com/).
- Following a Gluten Free diet can be achieved by avoiding foods which naturally contain gluten. Gluten Free foods from the following categories; biscuits, cereals, cooking aids, grains/flours and pasta are widely available from supermarkets.
- Patients with coeliac disease who are having difficulty maintaining a gluten free diet should seek advice and support from GP, community pharmacist, dietician or [Coeliac UK](https://www.coeliacuk.com/).

- [Coeliac UK](#) has a number of useful resources, information, recipes and contacts on their website including advice on maintaining a [healthy diet](#).
- [Coeliac UK](#) helpline: 0333 332 2033

Action required by practices

- Practices to review their gluten free patients and deprescribe all gluten free foods from the following categories: biscuits, cereals, cooking aids, grains and pasta
- Prescribers should recommend that their prescribed allowance of bread or bread mix/flour must form part of a balanced gluten free diet made up of additional staple items available for purchase. Advice on a balanced gluten free diet can be found at [Coeliac UK](#).
- Patients should be reminded that the prescribed foods are for their own use only, and should not be shared with members of the family / household or friends
- Practices should avoid prescribing more than the quantities of gluten-free foods included in [Table 1](#)
- If patients require greater quantities than those being prescribed or require items from categories no longer recommended for prescribing they should be advised to purchase
- Prescriptions should not exceed a period of one month
- Prescriptions for bread should specify whether fresh, part baked or long life. Please see [Table 3](#) for further guidance.

Table 3

Additional information	Fresh Bread	Loaf (Long life)	Part Baked Loaf
Expiry	3-5 days	12 weeks from date of baking	Extended shelf life before opening. Once baked and opened remains fresh for 3 days in an airtight container.
Supplied as	Case Of 8 x 400g	Single loaf of 400g	Single loaf of 400g
Can be prescribed on NHS	Yes	Yes	Yes
preparation	Can be consumed on delivery	Can be consumed on delivery	Requires baking before consumption
storage	Can be frozen	Can be frozen	Can be frozen prior to opening.
options	White, Fibre, Sliced	White, Fibre, Sliced or unsliced	White, Fibre.
Risk of waste due to volume and expiry	High	Low as only one loaf is dispensed	Moderate. Once opened will remain fresh for 3 days.
Number of units that would be prescribed on a single occasion	EIGHT	ONE	ONE
Prescribable unit allowance	High risk of exceeding the allowance	Low risk as one loaf can be prescribed when requested by the patient for them to consume	Moderate risk as one loaf can be prescribed when requested. However, the requests could be often due to the 3-day expiry post opening and baking.
Prescribed as	Juvela Fresh Sliced white loaf 8 x400g	Juvela GF Loaf (400g) Juvela Loaf Sliced (400g)	Juvela GF part bake loaf (400g)

References

1. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/11/prescribing-gluten-free-foods-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs.pdf>
2. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/medicines-2/medicines-optimisation/prescribing-gluten-free-foods-in-primary-care-guidance-for-ccgs-faqs/#will-ccgs-be-provided-with-guidance-to-support-their-prescribing-policies>
3. <https://www.coeliac.org.uk/information-and-support/coeliac-disease/once-diagnosed/prescriptions/national-prescribing-guidelines/?&&type=rfst&set=true#cookie-widget>