**Hull Clinical Commissioning Group**

**Coeliac disease: Policy on Prescribing of Gluten Free Products**

**Aim**

To provide an appropriate amount of basic foodstuffs for a healthy diet to an individual with established coeliac disease (CD), dermatitis herpetiformis (DH) and steatorrhea due to gluten sensitivity. The prescribed items are for individuals and not family and friends.

An increasingly wide range of products are available for purchase for people with coeliac disease, both those specifically designed for them and other foodstuffs. Many are available from normal food outlets. There is a concern that a small number of patients are demanding more than is appropriate of a wider range of products, which is why these guidelines have been developed, drawing upon guidance from Coeliac UK (<https://www.coeliac.org.uk/document-library/128-prescribable-products-list/?return=/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle/prescriptions/>

**Diagnosis**

CD is not an allergy or simple food intolerance. It is a genetic autoimmune disease triggered by eating gluten. It is more common in patients with other autoimmune conditions including Type 1 diabetes and thyroid disease.

When a GP suspects a diagnosis of coeliac disease, a serological test for the detection of endomysial and human tissue transglutaminase should be arranged2. If the result is positive or, despite a negative result, the GP still strongly suspects CD the GP should refer to the gastroenterologist for endoscopy and biopsy.

CD should not be confused with:

 **Irritable Bowel Syndrome** (IBS), which is a chronic non-inflammatory condition characterised by abdominal pain, bloating and change in bowel habit

**or**

 **Wheat Intolerance** – some people with IBS find that their symptoms of IBS are made worse by eating wheat. Reducing the wheat content of the diet may improve symptoms but there is no need to remove other gluten containing foods from the diet.

**Prescribing**

Prescribing of gluten free foods is restricted to established CD only and no other conditions such as IBS and Wheat Intolerance.

The CCG supports the prescribing of basic food requirements up to the minimum level advised by Coeliac UK, but not items such as biscuits or cake mix. Patients are encouraged to agree a small list of basic food requirements, such as bread or pasta that will normally be prescribed. Other additional basic foods and non-essential GF products are readily available to purchase from supermarkets, pharmacies or health food stores etc.

Some supermarkets have useful gluten free advice on their websites. The Advisory Committee on Borderline Services ACBS has given approval for the prescribing of gluten free oats as a basic staple food.1

**Oats in the gluten free diet.**

Oats contain a gluten-like protein, avenins. Oats can be contaminated with gluten due to the environment they are grown in and the milling process. Uncontaminated oats, labelled as gluten free, are grown and milled in a protected environment. Research suggests that most adults and children can include uncontaminated oat products in their gluten-free diet. However a small number of people with coeliac disease may be sensitive to avenins. The introduction of oats should be carefully monitored by the healthcare team. It is suggested that oats should be excluded for the first 6-12 twelve months of a gluten free diet and introduced with careful monitoring1

Prescribing should be for a maximum of one month supply at a time, in line with normal CCG policy. In addition, large quantities are not recommended because of shelf life and storage issues.

Prescriptions should be annotated with “ACBS”.

Patients who pay for their prescriptions can obtain pre-payment certificates from <https://apps.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/ppcwebsales/patient.do> or phone 0300 330 1341

**Prescribing Guidance**

The maximum amount of units prescribed per month for a patient should not exceed the number given in the table below.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **1 unit** is equivalent to | **400g** bread/baguettes/rolls**250g** pasta**2** pizza bases |
| **1.5 units** is equivalent to | **500g** oats |
| **1.5 units** is equivalent to | **300g** breakfast cereal |
| **2 units** is equivalent to | **500g** bread/flour mix |

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **AGE/SEX** | **SUGGESTED MONTHLY UNITS** |
| **CHILD** |  |
| **1 – 3YEARS** | **10** |
| **4 – 6** | **11** |
| **7 – 10** | **13** |
| **11 – 14** | **15** |
| **15 - 18** | **18** |
| **MEN** |  |
| **19 – 59** | **18** |
| **60 – 74** | **16** |
| **75+** | **14** |
| **WOMEN** |  |
| **19 – 74** | **14** |
| **75+** | **12** |
| **Breastfeeding** | **Add 4 units** |
| **3rd Trimester of pregnancy** | **Add 1 unit** |
| **Higher Physical Activity** | **Add 4 units** |

**References**

1. Gluten-free foods: Coeliac UK 2016

<https://www.coeliac.org.uk/document-library/128-prescribable-products-list/?return=/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle/prescriptions/>

2 NG 20 Coeliac Disease: recognition, assessment and management NICE 2015