

## Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group Medicines Management Committee

### Gluten Free Prescribing Position Statement January 2019

#### Background

**Gluten Free products (excluding bread and flour mixes) will no longer be prescribed on the NHS; nationally this has been decided by NHS England and will take effect in December 2018.**

- Gluten-free (GF) foods are available on prescription to patients diagnosed with gluten sensitivity, and have been since the late 1960s when their availability was extremely limited.
- A wide range of GF foods is now readily available in supermarkets and other food outlets, meaning that the ability of patients to obtain these foods without a prescription has greatly increased.
- Following its consultation on the availability of gluten-free foods on NHS prescription, the government has decided to restrict gluten-free prescribing to bread and mixes only. The majority of consultation responses were in favour of this.

#### Guidance for clinicians on gluten free foods prescribing

- Newly diagnosed patients should be encouraged to maintain a gluten free diet lifestyle and have the opportunity to see appropriate healthcare professionals to discuss how to follow a gluten free diet. All coeliac patients should be informed that gluten free foods (except bread and flour mixes) are no longer routinely prescribed on the NHS.
- NICE quality standards for coeliac disease specify that patients should be informed about the importance of a gluten free diet and given information and support to help them follow it. This information should include:
  - Types of foods containing gluten and suitable alternative (including gluten-free substitutes)
  - Explanation of food labelling
  - Information sources that they can access about gluten free diets, ideas for recipes and cookbooks
  - Management of social situations, eating out and travelling abroad
  - Avoiding food cross contamination at home and to minimise risk of accidental gluten intake when eating out
  - Role of local and national coeliac support groups
- An annual review should be offered to coeliac patients in which the following should be covered: weight and height monitored, symptoms reviewed, consider need for assessment of diet and adherence to gluten free diet, consider need for specialist dietetic and nutritional advice
- There are a range of supporting leaflets that can be given to patients available via [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) on how to follow a gluten free diet (including gluten free checklists, advice on eating out, cookbooks and recipes). Patients should be signposted to this website and advised gluten free products can be purchased from majority of supermarkets/shops, it is possible to eat a healthy balanced gluten free diet without the need for specialist products (e.g. naturally gluten free foods include rice and potatoes). Patients should be informed of

the importance to maintain a healthy, balanced gluten free diet to ensure they are receiving enough nutrients (vitamin and minerals).

- In line with national guidance, 8 units of bread or flour mix, is adequate to maintain a healthy and balanced diet and lifestyle per month. Clinicians should discuss with the patients their lifestyle and prescribe appropriate units accordingly.

#### **Guidance for patients on gluten free foods prescribing**

- In line with national guidance – gluten free foods (except bread and flour mixes) will no longer be routinely prescribed on the NHS.
- There are a range of supporting information available via [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) on how to follow a gluten free diet (including gluten free checklists, advice on eating out, cookbooks and recipes).
- Gluten free products can be purchased from majority of supermarkets/shops, it is possible to eat a healthy balanced gluten free diet without the need for specialist products (e.g. naturally gluten free foods include rice and potatoes). Patients should be informed of the importance to maintain a healthy, balanced gluten free diet to ensure they are receiving enough nutrients (vitamin and minerals).

#### **References:**

Coeliac UK. Gluten free diet and lifestyle [Online]. [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) Accessed 26/9/2018.

National Institute of Health and Care Excellence (NICE). NG20. *Coeliac disease: recognition, assessment and management*. September 2015. [www.nice.org.uk](http://www.nice.org.uk) Accessed 26/9/2018.

Coeliac UK. 2011. *Gluten-free foods: a revised prescribing guide*. [Online]. [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) Accessed 27/12/2018.