

December 2017

Charter House
Parkway
Welwyn Garden City
Hertfordshire
AL8 6JL

www.enhertscg.nhs.uk

Dear colleague,

Re: Changes to NHS East and North Hertfordshire CCG's policy on prescribing gluten-free foods

I am writing to inform you of a change in local policy regarding the prescribing of gluten-free foods and the actions your practice will need to take to implement the new policy.

Following a 10-week public consultation held during the summer, the GP-led boards of Hertfordshire's two CCGs both agreed that **gluten-free foods will no longer be routinely available on prescription**, apart from in exceptional circumstances as described below. You might be interested to know that 77% of the public who took part in the consultation agreed with this proposal. 67% of people who considered themselves to be directly affected by this policy supported these proposals during the consultation.

In the following circumstances the GP should use their discretion to prescribe a limited number of units of flour and/ or bread;

- Patients with learning disabilities who could otherwise find it difficult to choose food products which are suitable for their condition. These patients are likely to be those who have a 'purple folder'.
- If a GP is concerned that by not issuing a prescription for gluten-free foods, a safeguarding risk may be posed to that patient or someone they care for.

Beverley Flowers
Chief Executive

Hari Pathmanathan
Chair



Hertfordshire Stop Smoking Service offers local help and advice to quit smoking.
Please go to www.smokefreehertfordshire.nhs.uk for more information or call
0800 389 3 998



This new policy will take effect from 15th January 2018. The full policy is available at www.enhertsccg.nhs.uk/gluten-free-foods and attached. Please write to identified patients who will be affected by the change in policy to make them aware of the changes. We have enclosed a template letter which you may wish to use.

We acknowledge that this change in policy may lead to questions from patients. Please print out a copy of the template letter (available on your clinical system and in Ardens) which will help to answer their concerns. If you need any further help to identify patients please contact a member of the Pharmacy and Medicines Management Optimisation Team on 01707 685000.

Practices are also asked to remember to remove gluten-free food off of the repeat prescribing system. Any patients who have any queries regarding pre-payment certificates should be directed to the following web form <https://www.surveymonkey.co.uk/r/reimbursement-pre-paid-certificates>

All newly diagnosed patients should be provided with support about how to eat a balanced gluten-free diet, including what foods are naturally gluten-free such as rice and potatoes and flour alternatives such as millet and cornflour. Advice about how to eat well without gluten can be found on www.nhs.uk and on the [Coeliac UK](http://www.coeliacuk.co.uk) website.

We are advising coeliac patients who are worried about their health following this change in policy to talk to their GP. Please note that NICE guidelines for the management of coeliac patients recommend an annual review and we would encourage practices to offer this.

You may also be aware that there has been a national consultation about the prescribing of gluten-free foods which has not yet announced any recommendations. The CCG will consider the outcomes and recommendations from this process when they are published.

Beverley Flowers
Chief Executive



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Hari Pathmanathan
Chair



If a patient is unhappy about the change to the policy and would like to raise their concerns they can contact the CCG's Patient Experience Team using the following details:

- Telephone – 01707 685356
- Email – enhccg.quality@nhs.net
- In writing – Quality Team, East and North Hertfordshire CCG, Charter House, Parkway, Welwyn Garden City, Hertfordshire, AL8 6JL

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me or a member of the Pharmacy and Medicines Management Optimisation Team on 01707 685000.

Yours sincerely,



Dr Hari Pathmanathan
Chair, East and North Hertfordshire CCG

Enc:

- Policy for the provision of Gluten-Free Food on the NHS in East and North Hertfordshire CCG
- Template letter for patients affected by the change in policy

CC: Community Pharmacists

Beverley Flowers
Chief Executive



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