

# A guide to essential gluten-free foods available from the pharmacy



**Ask Your Pharmacist**

## Gluten-free foods on prescription

**Staple gluten-free foods are available on prescription if you have received a medical diagnosis of coeliac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis\* from your doctor.**

*Getting a diagnosis of coeliac disease can be life changing. However, once you adapt to a new way of eating and learn how important it is to maintain a balanced and nutritious gluten-free diet, not only will you feel much better and your symptoms will gradually disappear, but you can expect to lead a full and healthy life.*



**In some areas of the country the quantity and type of gluten-free foods allowed on prescription may vary. Please discuss with your GP if you have concerns and are experiencing difficulties accessing a prescription.**

\*For further information on coeliac disease and dermatitis herpetiformis, see the CORE patient leaflet 'Information on coeliac disease'. To download a free copy visit [www.juvela.co.uk](http://www.juvela.co.uk)

## Why is nutritional support so important?

Getting a medical diagnosis of coeliac disease is important. Once diagnosed, you will have contact with health professionals who can support you in managing your gluten-free diet and make sure that you have regular health checks.

As a gluten-free diet is the recognised medical treatment for coeliac disease, your prescription will provide you with a monthly supply of safe staple gluten-free foods. This is important as although there is no cure for the coeliac condition, if you follow a strict gluten-free diet, you will reduce your risk of developing complications and can expect to lead a normal, healthy life.

Every month you will have the opportunity to see your local pharmacist who will be able to answer any questions you may have about your prescription and provide you with up to date information and advice.

Recent guidance from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE)\* recommends that patients with coeliac disease receive an annual review. The purpose of an annual review is to check your nutritional status and to help you maintain a strict gluten-free diet, as well as monitoring your symptoms for long term complications. Ask your GP if you can have an annual review with a dietitian. Use this appointment to discuss any issues you may have. If there are any ongoing symptoms or concerns, you will be referred back to your GP for a full medical review.

You can then rest assured that your essential dietary and nutritional needs are provided for and that you can continue to enjoy eating a healthy, balanced gluten-free diet containing your favourite staple foods, such as bread and flour.

## Arrangement for prescriptions in your area

The arrangements for gluten-free prescriptions vary across the UK. Please ask your GP or dietitian for further information on the prescribing practices in your area.

**ENGLAND** In England NHS prescriptions are charged. However, some groups of people are exempt from prescription charges including children, the over 60's and those receiving income support.

**WALES / NORTHERN IRELAND** If you live in Wales / Northern Ireland, your gluten-free prescriptions are free. Your GP will discuss your gluten-free requirements and set up your prescription.

**SCOTLAND** If you live in Scotland your gluten-free prescriptions are free. You will access your prescription from your pharmacist through the Scottish Gluten-free Food Service. NHS Scotland has produced an information pack which is available to download from: [www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk) and search for Gluten-free Food Service.

### What if I pay for my prescriptions?

If you are eligible to pay for your prescriptions and are likely to use more than 3 units of gluten-free food per month then it is more cost effective to get a **Prescription Prepayment Certificate (PPC)**. This will cover all your staple gluten-free food requirements, as well as any other medicines you may need. The cost of an annual PPC is £104 (January 2017) To find out more about the PPC:

- Ask your pharmacist for a PPC form (FP95)
- Apply online: [www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1127.aspx](http://www.nhsbsa.nhs.uk/1127.aspx)
- Call the PPC order line on 0300 330 1341

## What types of foods are available?

Gluten-free alternatives of everyday staple foods which are essential to a balanced diet are available on prescription. These foods are typically fortified with extra nutrients including calcium and B-vitamins which are of particular benefit to coeliac patients.

All gluten-free foods available on prescription are approved by the Advisory Committee on Borderline Substances who advises the Department of Health on what products can be prescribed to patients.

**Bread & Rolls** - a selection of fresh and long life gluten-free loaves and rolls available in white and fibre varieties.



**Flour Mixes** - gluten-free all-purpose flour substitutes in white and fibre varieties - suitable for making bread and other baking.



**Breakfast Cereals** - a selection of fortified breakfast cereals and 'pure' oats\*.

*\*sourced from uncontaminated oats milled in a dedicated production environment*



**Pasta** - available in a selection of shapes and in white and fibre varieties



**Pizza Bases** - part-baked pizza bases ready to top and bake.



**Crackers** - a selection of savoury biscuits, crackers and crispbread.



**Biscuits** - a selection of plain biscuits.  
*(Sweet biscuits are only prescribed in exceptional circumstances on clinical advice).*



## How much food can I order on prescription?

Healthcare experts have produced helpful guidelines which recommend the monthly requirements of gluten-free foods a person with coeliac disease needs to maintain a healthy balanced diet.

### Choose your group

The table below indicates the monthly recommended number of units for different age and gender groups.

Age Group	Recommended No. 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
3rd trimester pregnancy	Add 1 unit
Breastfeeding	Add 4 units

Gluten-Free Food: Revised prescribing guidelines 2011

For further information, visit: [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) and search 'gluten-free foods: a revised prescribing guide'

## What is a unit?

### 1 unit =



OR



OR



OR



1 (400g) loaf of bread/  
1 (5x85g) pack of rolls

1 (200g) pack  
of crackers

1 (2x180g) pack  
of pizza bases

1 (250g) pack  
of pasta

### 1.5 units =



1 (300g-500g) pack of  
breakfast cereal

### 2 units =



OR



1 (500g) pack of  
all-purpose mix\*

1 (500g) pack  
of pasta

## Typical Monthly Prescriptions

Here are some examples of how you could make up your monthly requirements with a range of gluten-free foods:

### CHILD AGED 11 - 14

- 3 x loaves of White Bread
- 3 x packs of Fibre Rolls
- 1 x pack White Mix\*
- 1 x pack of Pasta (500g)
- 2 x packs of Breakfast Cereal
- 2 x packs of Pizza Bases

*This equates to 15 units*

### MALE AGED 19 - 59

- 8 x loaves of Fresh Bread\*\*
- 2 x packs of Fibre Mix\*
- 1 x pack of Pasta (250g)
- 1 x pack of Pizza Bases
- 1 x pack of Crackers
- 2 x packs of Breakfast Cereal

*This equates to 18 units*

### FEMALE AGED 19 - 74

- 2 x loaves of Fibre Bread
- 1 x pack of White Rolls
- 1 x pack of White Mix\*
- 1 x pack of Fibre Mix\*
- 1 x pack of Pasta (500g)
- 1 x pack of Pizza Bases
- 1 x pack of Crackers
- 2 x packs of Breakfast Cereal

*This equates to 14 units*

\* Gluten-free mix is an all-purpose flour substitute.

\*\* Fresh loaves and rolls are supplied in cases of 8. This equates to 8 units of your monthly allowance.

## Setting up a gluten-free prescription

The procedures for setting up a gluten-free prescription vary across the UK. You will normally be asked to make an appointment to see your GP who will discuss your requirements and will set up your gluten-free prescription with you. In Scotland, you will access your prescription from the pharmacist through the Scottish Gluten-Free Food Service\*.

### Before seeing your healthcare professional

#### 1 Estimate what you might need

Prior to your appointment with your GP, try and keep a record of how much staple food you eat in a month. For example, how many slices of bread or bowls of cereal. Don't forget to include the flour used in cooking and baking too.

To help you get started download a food diary template:

**[www.juvela.co.uk/fooddiary](http://www.juvela.co.uk/fooddiary)**

#### 2 Request a newly diagnosed sample pack

Gluten-free manufacturers offer all newly diagnosed coeliacs a free sample pack to give you the opportunity to try some gluten-free foods before agreeing with your healthcare professionals which ones will be most appropriate.

#### 3 Take a look at Coeliac UK's prescribable list

Coeliac UK produce a list of all gluten-free foods currently available on prescription. If you take a copy of the prescribable list to your GP, you can discuss with them which items are available to you. Visit Coeliac UK's website: **[www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)** or call their helpline: 0333 332 2033.

\***[www.nhsinform.co.uk](http://www.nhsinform.co.uk)** and search for Gluten-free Food Service

## Managing your gluten-free prescription

Your local pharmacist is the healthcare professional responsible for dispensing your gluten-free prescription. They are also part of the healthcare team involved in supporting you in managing your condition and will be able to answer any other health concerns you may have.

Many pharmacies across the UK are now using electronic prescription services (EPS), whereby your prescription will automatically be sent from your GP surgery to a nominated pharmacy of your choice. Ask your GP at your appointment if they offer EPS.

### TOP TIP

- *Visit NHS Choices - Find Pharmacy Services and search by your postcode for your nearest pharmacy*

## What is the procedure for dispensing my gluten-free prescription?

It normally takes around 48 hours from when your pharmacist receives your gluten-free prescription for your order to be ready. Fresh bread is delivered into pharmacy on set days and your pharmacist will advise you on this.

### TOP TIP

- *Many pharmacies now offer home delivery services. Just ask your pharmacist if this service is available and if you qualify*

## How do I get my prescription repeated?

Usually this is done automatically. Ask your pharmacist about the arrangements for getting your gluten-free prescription repeated each month as the procedure may vary depending on where you live.

### Can I make changes to my prescription?

Yes, you can make changes to your prescription. This is especially important when you are first adjusting to a gluten-free diet.

#### TOP TIP

- *Ask your pharmacist about making any changes as they can advise you on alternative products and what is new*
- *Remember, you can always ask to try samples of new products from the manufacturers before changing your prescription*

#### NOTES

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This information guide has been produced by **juvela**

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This resource has been reviewed by the British Dietetic Association.



This communication has been approved by the NPA.

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