

# Gluten free foods

## Information for patients

From 30 November 2016, you will no longer receive gluten-free foods on NHS prescription. This applies whether you have received gluten-free foods as a prescription from your GP or through the community pharmacy scheme.

This follows a decision that was made by NHS Kernow which is made up of all GPs in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly, including your practice. This decision was based on evidence gathered from the public and clinicians, supported by a full and thorough impact assessment to help NHS Kernow understand the effectiveness of the service.

The NHS in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly is under enormous financial pressure, due to increasing demand and rising costs. NHS Kernow is predicting it will end the year with a £53million deficit and is now reviewing everything it pays for to ensure services provide the best clinical outcomes, based on the needs of the population and the money it has available to spend.

**NHS Kernow spends £350,000 a year on prescription gluten-free foods. It is often less expensive to buy gluten-free foods from supermarkets or online than what the NHS pays for these items on prescription - some cases this can be triple the cost.**

This decision was not taken lightly but the NHS is having to make some difficult decisions to ensure it can continue to fund essential services such as hospitals, mental health services and vital medicines.

If you have coeliac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis, your GP or dietitian will still be able to support you to manage your condition. The following information may also be useful to help you manage a gluten-free diet.



## The gluten-free diet

The treatment for coeliac disease is to follow a strict gluten-free diet. Gluten is a protein found in wheat, rye and barley and foods containing these should not be eaten. Some people with coeliac disease may also be sensitive to oats.

There are many naturally gluten-free foods that you can continue to eat on a gluten-free diet:

- Potatoes
- Rice
- Pulses (peas, beans and lentils)
- Nuts and seeds
- Corn, millet, polenta, quinoa
- Meat, fish, eggs, plain tofu
- Milk, cheese
- Fruit, vegetables

## Where can I buy gluten-free foods now that prescriptions have stopped?

You will need to buy all gluten-free substitute foods you want to eat, including:

- Bread / rolls / baguettes
- Pasta
- Flour
- Crackers
- Pizza bases
- Luxury items such as cakes, biscuits, pastry items

You can buy many gluten-free substitute foods, such as gluten-free breads, flour and pasta, from many supermarkets, health food shops, by mail order and online.

### Supermarkets

Many supermarkets stock a range of gluten-free foods. These are often in the 'Free-From' section or alongside other foods in the bakery, cereal or frozen foods sections. Supermarkets often list gluten-free foods on their websites and you may wish to check before you go shopping. You can also ask staff in stores to help you find gluten-free foods.

### Gluten-free Guarantee

Coeliac UK's Gluten-free Guarantee campaign is a commitment by supermarkets to sell eight core gluten-free items in stock across all their stores. These are white bread, pasta, cereal, flour, cereal bars, rolls, crackers and one other bread (brown or seeded). Asda and Morrison's have signed up and other supermarkets are working towards it.

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#### Budget supermarkets (Aldi and Lidl)

At the moment, Aldi and Lidl don't have a dedicated gluten-free range. You can ask staff or check online for which foods are suitable for a gluten-free diet. They may occasionally sell gluten-free foods, so keep checking the shelves when you shop there.

#### Supermarket online shopping and delivery

Most supermarkets offer an online shopping service. Your shopping is delivered to your home at a time slot you choose. You can shop online with Asda, Iceland, Morrisons, Ocado, Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose. Please note some supermarkets have a minimum order amount, so check before you place your order.

#### Internet shopping

There are several gluten-free manufacturers that sell their gluten-free products online. There are also websites dedicated to 'Free From' foods or gluten-free foods that supply products from a range of manufacturers.

#### Convenience stores

Shops such as Co-op, Spar, Londis and other local convenience stores sometimes sell gluten-free foods or can often order specific gluten-free items. Ask a member of staff if they can order gluten-free products for you to buy.

#### Health food shops

Many health food shops stock gluten-free foods and naturally gluten-free alternative flours and grains. Staff will be able to help you.

#### Pharmacy

Some products you may have previously received on prescription, such as Juvela and Glutafin ranges, are not available to buy in the supermarkets. Ask your pharmacist if they are able to order these items in for you to buy.

#### Delivered ready meals

If you have difficulty shopping and preparing food, or would like some frozen gluten-free ready meals available, Wiltshire Farm Foods and Oakhouse Foods produce a selection of gluten-free frozen ready meals, with free delivery (free over £30 for Oakhouse Foods). They deliver across Cornwall. Wiltshire Farm Foods also deliver to the Isles of Scilly. You can place an order online or by telephone:

- [www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com](http://www.wiltshirefarmfoods.com) or call **0800 077 3100**
- [www.oakhousefoods.co.uk](http://www.oakhousefoods.co.uk) or call **0333 370 2514**

## Food labelling

Remember to check that any food you buy is gluten-free. Many specialist gluten-free foods will say 'Gluten-free' or 'Suitable for Coeliacs' on the label, or will have the Crossed Grain symbol. If none of these are shown, or you are unsure, please check the ingredients or ask someone in the shop to help you.

Coeliac UK has more detailed information on food labelling and produces a Food and Drink Directory. Coeliac UK also has a Gluten-free on the move smartphone app, which you can download from [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk) or from the App Store for iOS devices and Google Play Store for Android devices.



## How can I keep my shopping costs down?

Check the reduced section in supermarkets and shops, especially the bakery or frozen food sections. You may find gluten-free items close to their best before or use by dates at a reduced price.

- Shop around and try different supermarkets or online to get the best price.
- You could try replacing specialist gluten-free foods in some meals with cheaper naturally gluten-free alternatives eg rice instead of gluten-free pasta, a jacket-potato instead of a sandwich. This will reduce the amount of specialist gluten-free foods you need to buy.

## Useful links

### Coeliac UK

Coeliac UK has a lot of useful information on their website including factsheets on:

1. [Gluten-free checklist](#)
2. [Gluten-free diet on a budget](#)

**W** [www.coeliac.org.uk](http://www.coeliac.org.uk)

**T** [0333 332 2033](tel:03333322033)

If you are having symptoms despite trying to follow a gluten-free diet, or you are losing weight without intending to, please see your GP.

If you have coeliac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis, you should have regular check ups with your GP, gastroenterologist, dietitian or specialist nurse.



To get this information in another format call:

 **01726 627800**