Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care System

NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board

For use in South and West Hertfordshire

Information leaflet on gluten-free products

What's changing?
People in Hertfordshire with coeliac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis will no longer be prescribed gluten-free foods.
Does this change affect everyone?
The guidance applies to everyone, including those who get free prescriptions. Clinical exceptions are for people with a learning disability who do not have a carer to help them manage their diet or people with safeguarding concerns.
Why will gluten-free foods no longer be prescribed?
We reviewed and updated our guidance for prescribing gluten-free foods after a consultation in the summer (July to September 2017) on a proposal to stop these foods being prescribed. The vast majority of people who responded to our consultation supported the proposal. This guidance is part of a package of measures we are taking to help make best use of NHS resources. Gluten-free foods can be bought easily without a prescription from most pharmacies and supermarkets.
Are gluten-free products that I buy in shops and online the same quality as those on prescription?
Yes – by law foods can only be labelled gluten-free if they have extremely low levels of gluten. The label is a sign that these foods are suitable for a gluten-free diet and will be of similar quality to the products the NHS has been buying.
I cannot afford to buy gluten-free foods as I am on a low income. How will the change affect me?
Patients on a low income will no longer get gluten-free foods on prescription because this guidance applies to everyone living in Hertfordshire, including those who get free prescriptions. This includes: • People with a medical or maternity exemption • Children under 16 and adults over 60 • People receiving income-related support You can access a *Gluten-free diet on a budget leaflet* from Coeliac UK's website: www.coeliac.org.uk/gluten-free-diet-and-lifestyle/food-shopping/gluten-free-diet-on-a-

budget/. Further information and advice is also available from NHS Choices at www.nhs.uk/conditions/Coeliac-disease/
If I can no longer get gluten-free foods on prescription how will I manage my coeliac disease?
You can manage coeliac disease by excluding foods from your diet that contain gluten. Gluten is a protein that's found in wheat, rye and barley for example. There are plenty of foods that don't contain gluten. Further information and advice about following a gluten-free diet is available on the NHS choices website at www.nhs.uk and from Coeliac UK's website www.coeliac.org.uk.
Which foods are naturally gluten-free?
There are a wide variety of foods which you can eat that are naturally gluten- free such as fresh fruits, fresh vegetables, fresh meat, fresh fish, fresh poultry, eggs, milk, rice, fresh potatoes, pulses and beans.
Where can I buy gluten-free products?
Most supermarkets sell gluten-free foods at competitive prices in-store and online. You can also buy pharmacy-only brands from pharmacies without a prescription.
Where can I get support?
Patients with coeliac disease are entitled to request an annual review with their GP. Coeliac UK offers excellent support for patients who need to adhere to a gluten-free diet by helping you to manage your diet and keep up-to-date with the latest developments. Visit their website at www.coeliac.org.uk or contact the local group at southherts@coeliac.org.uk.
How will this guidance change affect people who have coeliac-type symptoms but have not yet been tested or diagnosed?
Gluten-free foods have only been available on prescription for people who had a confirmed diagnosis of coeliac disease or dermatitis herpetiformis.

For more information you can contact us on hvccgpatientfeedback@nhs.net, 01442 898865 or visit our website www.hertsvalleysccg.nhs.uk.

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