

November 2018 (revised 20th December 2018)

PSNC Briefing 061/18: Changes to the availability of gluten-free foods on NHS prescription

The following information and guidance has been compiled by PSNC's Dispensing and Supply Team to support community pharmacy teams as changes to the availability of gluten-free foods on NHS prescription in England come into effect from **4th December 2018**.

Introduction

Following a consultation on the availability of gluten-free (GF) foods at NHS expense in primary care in England, the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) announced in February 2018 that GF food prescribing would be restricted to GF breads and GF food mixes only.

A second consultation took place in August 2018 and considered the amendments to regulations needed to bring this change into effect. The [outcome](#) of this consultation was published by DHSC on 6th November 2018 which outlines the amendments required to the Prescribing Regulations and changes to the Part XV (the 'ACBS list') and Part XVIII A (the 'Blacklist') of the Drug Tariff which are explained below.

Changes to the Blacklist

The National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of Drugs etc.) Regulations 2004 are being amended to remove previously listed GF foods from Schedule 1, which is reproduced in Part XVIII A (the 'Blacklist') of the Drug Tariff. Instead, the wording in the regulations will be amended to prevent prescribers from prescribing all GF and very low GF foods except for GF bread and mixes, and for very low gluten bread and food mixes. The Amendment Regulations were laid before Parliament in November 2018 and will come into force on **4th December 2018**.

Changes to the ACBS list

In the December 2018 edition of the Drug Tariff, the ACBS list – also known as the 'Borderline Substances list' – in Part XV will be amended to exclude all GF food products in the categories of biscuits, cereals, cooking aids, grains/flours, and pasta. However, a list of recommended GF breads and GF mixes ([see Table overleaf](#)) will be retained in the ACBS list and remain available on prescription in primary care. The Prescribing Regulations do not exclude other GF breads and mixes not specified on the ACBS list and these will continue to be reimbursed if dispensed.

Advice for community pharmacy teams

In advance of the changes, pharmacy teams are advised to keep track of any EPS and paper prescriptions (including omissions) for GF foods ensuring that reimbursement claims are submitted for these along with the November prescription bundle. Patients that are prescribed any restricted GF foods after 4th December 2018 should be advised of the changes to NHS rules and referred back to their prescriber to discuss suitable alternatives. Contractors that hold stocks of GF foods, may wish to review their stock holding policy on GF foods that will no longer be permitted on the NHS from December.

It is also recommended that you speak to your system supplier regarding the timing of any updates to make sure these are applied in time to prevent pharmacy staff from inadvertently dispensing prescriptions for GF foods (except for GF bread and mixes) after this date.

NHS England has published national [CCG guidance on Prescribing Gluten-Free Foods in Primary Care](#). This guidance has been reviewed and endorsed by the Low Priority Prescribing clinical working group. The guidance provides recommendations that encourage CCGs to align their local policies with national arrangements.

ACBS approved gluten-free breads and mixes allowed on prescription from 4th December 2018.

Barkat gluten-free all purpose flour mix	Barkat gluten-free brown rice bread
Barkat gluten-free hi-fibre bread mix	Barkat gluten-free par-baked baguettes
Barkat gluten-free par-baked rolls	Barkat gluten-free par-baked white bread sliced
Barkat gluten-free wheat free multigrain rice bread	Barkat gluten-free white rice bread
Barkat gluten-free wholemeal sliced bread	Ener-G gluten-free brown rice bread
Ener-G gluten-free dinner rolls	Ener-G gluten-free rice loaf
Ener-G gluten-free Seattle brown loaf	Ener-G gluten-free tapioca bread
Ener-G gluten-free white rice bread	Finax gluten-free coarse flour mix
Finax gluten-free fibre bread mix	Finax gluten-free flour mix
Genius gluten-free brown sandwich bread sliced	Genius gluten-free seeded brown farmhouse loaf sliced
Genius gluten-free white sandwich bread sliced	Glutafin gluten-free 4 white rolls
Glutafin gluten-free baguettes	Glutafin gluten-free bread mix 32
Glutafin gluten-free fibre bread mix	Glutafin gluten-free fibre loaf sliced
Glutafin gluten-free high fibre loaf sliced	Glutafin gluten-free multipurpose white mix
Glutafin gluten-free part-baked 2 long white rolls	Glutafin gluten-free part-baked 4 fibre rolls
Glutafin gluten-free part-baked 4 white rolls	Glutafin gluten-free Select bread mix
Glutafin gluten-free Select fibre bread mix	Glutafin gluten-free Select fibre loaf sliced
Glutafin gluten-free Select fresh brown loaf sliced	Glutafin gluten-free Select fresh seeded loaf sliced
Glutafin gluten-free Select fresh white loaf sliced	Glutafin gluten-free Select multipurpose fibre mix
Glutafin gluten-free Select multipurpose white mix	Glutafin gluten-free Select seeded loaf sliced
Glutafin gluten-free Select white loaf sliced	Glutafin gluten-free wheat-free fibre mix
Glutafin gluten-free white loaf sliced	Glutenex gluten-free white bread mix
Innovative Solutions gluten-free bakery blend	Just: gluten-free good white bread sliced
Just: gluten-free good white rolls	Just: gluten-free white sandwich bread
Juvela gluten-free bread rolls	Juvela gluten-free fibre bread rolls
Juvela gluten-free fibre loaf sliced	Juvela gluten-free fibre loaf unsliced
Juvela gluten-free fibre mix	Juvela gluten-free fresh fibre loaf sliced
Juvela gluten-free fresh fibre rolls	Juvela gluten-free fresh white loaf sliced
Juvela gluten-free fresh white rolls	Juvela gluten-free harvest mix
Juvela gluten-free loaf sliced	Juvela gluten-free loaf unsliced
Juvela gluten-free mix	Juvela gluten-free part-baked fibre bread rolls
Juvela gluten-free part-baked fibre loaf	Juvela gluten-free part-baked loaf
Juvela gluten-free part-baked white bread rolls	Lifestyle gluten-free brown bread
Lifestyle gluten-free brown bread rolls	Lifestyle gluten-free high fibre bread rolls
Lifestyle gluten-free white bread rolls	Mums Mill gluten-free quick bread mix
Orgran gluten-free bread mix	Proceli basic mix
Proceli gluten free part-baked baguettes	Tobia Brown Teff Bread Mix
Tobia White Teff Bread Mix	Tritamyl gluten-free brown bread mix
Tritamyl gluten-free flour mix	Tritamyl gluten-free white bread mix
Warburtons gluten free brown bread sliced	Warburtons gluten free brown rolls
Warburtons gluten free white bread sliced	Warburtons gluten free white rolls

Frequently Asked Questions

Q. Will I be reimbursed for dispensing FP10 prescriptions for any GF food (except those previously Blacklisted) issued by the prescriber before the 4th of December 2018 but dispensed after this date?

A. The amendment to the Prescribing Regulations did not come in place until the 4th December 2018 so any NHS prescriptions for GF foods issued before this date remain valid for six months from the appropriate date. Therefore, FP10 prescriptions for all GF foods (except those previously Blacklisted) issued before the 4th December will continue to be reimbursed by the NHS BSA for up to six months after the appropriate date until the end of June 2019.

Q. Will I be reimbursed for any batch issues of repeatable prescriptions for all GF foods (except those previously Blacklisted) that were issued by a prescriber before 4th December 2018?

A. Yes, repeatable prescriptions for all GF foods (except those previously Blacklisted) issued before the 4th December will continue to be reimbursed for up to 12 months after the appropriate date on the prescription until the end of December 2019. The amendment to the Prescribing Regulations which came into force on the 4th December 2018 restricts NHS prescribing of GF foods (except for GF breads and mixes) and any repeatable prescriptions for these issued on or after the 4th December will not be legally valid.

Q. Can I dispense a GF bread or food mix that is not listed on the ACBS list?

A. Food marketed as gluten-free or very low gluten may not be ordered under the National Health Service (General Medical Services Contracts) (Prescription of Drugs etc.) (Amendment) Regulations 2018, unless they are gluten-free breads or gluten-free food mixes. Part XV (ACBS list) of the Drug Tariff lists GF breads and mixes that have been recommended by the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC). However, pharmacies will continue to be reimbursed if a prescription is received for a GF bread or mix that is not listed in Part XV. Products held on dm+d that do not fall into the category of either being a GF mix or bread will have the Schedule 1 indicator applied. Products that are not listed on dm+d and are prescribed as mix or a formulation of bread will be reimbursed on prescription by the NHSBSA.

Q. A regular patient recently purchased a pre-payment certificate (PPC) to cover the cost of their GF food prescriptions. Is the patient able to obtain a refund for their PPC now that they will only be able to access a limited range of GF foods on the NHS?

No. A PPC cannot be refunded because of the amendments to the prescribing regulations of GF foods. Changes to GF prescribing were announced in February 2018 giving patients and NHS services an extended period of notice before the amended regulations came into force in December 2018. Pre-payment certificates cover all prescription medicines and not just GF foods so can continue to be used until they expire. Patients can only claim a refund of a PPC if they become entitled to free NHS prescriptions.

If you have queries on this PSNC Briefing, please contact [PSNC's Dispensing and Supply Team](mailto:info@psnc.org.uk).