



John McGuinness, T.D.  
Dáil Éireann,  
Leinster House,  
Kildare Street,  
Dublin 2.

12<sup>th</sup> January 2022

PQ: 61436/21

**To ask the Minister for Health if he will consider introducing a scheme to ease the cost burden on persons and families that for health reasons are forced to buy more expensive specific types of essential foodstuffs such as gluten free products; and if he will make a statement on the matter. -John McGuinness**

Dear Deputy McGuinness,

The Health Service Executive has been requested to reply directly to you in the context of the above Parliamentary Question (Reference 61436/21), which you submitted to the Minister for Health for response.

There is no current HSE scheme to supplement the cost for existing, or newly diagnosed patients with coeliac disease requiring gluten free diets to supplement the cost of the diet. Such products were discontinued under the statutory schemes in 2012.

Historically there was a scheme (Department of Social protection) called the 'Diet Supplement' payment which was a payment to help with the cost of a special diet prescribed by your doctor or hospital consultant. The Diet Supplement was discontinued for new applicants from 1 February 2014. People who were getting Diet Supplement before 1 February 2014 were permitted to keep the payment for as long as they continue to be entitled to the payment (Info as per <https://www.gov.ie/en/service/1d4b07-dietary-supplement/>)

A person can claim relief for certain food products if they have specific dietary requirements due to a medical condition. This applies to persons with coeliac disease where they require gluten free foods specifically manufactured to be gluten free. Details of this scheme are available at <https://www.revenue.ie/en/personal-tax-credits-reliefs-and-exemptions/health-and-age/health-expenses/additional-diet-expenses-for-coeliacs-and-diabetics.aspx>.

It should be noted that the marketplace has evolved whereby such products are widely available in supermarkets at a more reasonable price than was historically costed to the

State when they were available in pharmacies through the statutory schemes and without incurring the further extra costs of a dispensing fee.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne Doyle". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Suzanne Doyle  
Primary Care Eligibility & Reimbursement Service