

Low Histamine Diet



What is Histamine?

Histamine is an inflammatory mediator. When a release of histamine is triggered, it helps the immune system respond to threats (e.g. infections, allergies). Small blood vessels are dilated to increase circulation and become more permeable to help white blood cells get to where they are

needed. This is helpful when it's needed and assuming the process is well-managed within the body.

As with many things in the body (e.g. cholesterol, estrogen, cortisol), too much of a good, normal, natural thing can become debilitating or even life-threatening.

Histamine intolerance is about the body becoming overloaded, where the amount of histamine present outweighs our ability to break it down. **Histamine comes from many sources.** We primarily get it from our foods. We also produce it in response to immune threats (as above), and some of the microbes in our gut also produce it as part of their normal metabolism. In a healthy, balanced body, enzymes are produced in the intestines (and also in the kidneys) that handles extracellular histamine (e.g. from food, microbes). Wear'n'tear on the gut lining, from things such as oral birth control, NSAID's or food sensitivities, can impair our enzyme capability. Another enzyme system handles intracellular histamine. Of course, nutrition is key here too, as these enzymes require B vitamins and minerals to work. And methylation is also required to reduce intracellular histamine (MTHFR, anyone?!).

Foods high in histamine include:

- dairy foods (especially cheese!)
- processed lunch meats
- beer and wine (especially red wine)
- foods made with yeast (e.g. bread)
- all fermented/cultured foods (pickles, sauerkraut, yogurt, kombucha...)
- vinegars (except apple cider vinegar)
- anchovies and other canned fish (e.g. tuna, sardines)
- avocado
- chocolate
- egg whites
- bananas and strawberries
- cashews
- black tea
- Diets very high in protein can also be part of the problem
- leftovers over 2 days old

A low-histamine diet can be a challenge but remember that a client doesn't have to implement it 100.0% in order to have a valid elimination trial and learn how their unique body responds. There are some excellent resources available online to guide your clients:

(e.g. <https://www.mindbodygreen.com/0-11175/everything-you-need-to-know-about-histamine-intolerance.html>)

<https://www.histamineintolerance.org.uk/about/the-food-diary/the-food-list/>

Histamine overload **rapid relief** can be achieved by:

- Decreasing or eliminating histamine-rich foods
- Reducing exposure to known allergenic triggers
- And targeted Supplements (see below)

Supplements that can help include:

- **Quercetin** Unlike typical antihistamine drugs, quercetin's "side effects" are positive and helpful for gut-healing.
- **High-quality B-complex**
- **Vitamin D3, Vitamin A and Zinc** (It is best to know your levels before adding these)
- **Diamine Oxidase** (or DAO) digestive enzymes to supplement what their body may not be making on its own
- **Certain probiotics** specifically with [Lactobacillus Rhamnosus](#) or [Plantarum](#) and good amounts of Bifidobacteria (Other forms of Lactobacillus can promote more histamine, especially if they are overgrown)

There are many other factors that can be at play with high histamine. Your practitioner will assess and get to the roots of each unique case!