



# Histamine

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## What Is Histamine?

Histamine has an important role to play in the body due to the fact that it is involved with the immune system, gut regulation and acts as a neurotransmitters (brain chemicals that help regulate moods). Histamine helps to regulate the sleep-wake cycle, digestive function such as gastric acid release and the modulation of gastrointestinal function.

Typically it is allergens such as pollen, dust mites or a food allergy that cause a release of histamine resulting in allergy symptoms, although many people don't realise foods can also contain high levels of histamine or can stimulate the release of histamine causing an allergy type response such as itching, wheezing, skin irritations or many other symptoms relating to gastrointestinal function and mood disturbances.

In our bodies, we have an enzyme called Diamine oxidase (DAO), which helps break down histamine, but for some people, they have decreased level of this enzyme resulting in increased histamine levels and associated symptoms of excessive histamine.

A low histamine diet is designed to help reduce the histamine load on the body and reduce associated symptoms, see diagram below. A blood test can be performed to determine if a person has high levels of histamine, but usually by eliminating foods that trigger histamine release, can help relieve symptoms. As always, if you have any symptoms that are concerning you, please see the relevant health care professional to discuss further.

### HISTAMINE AND THE BODY



These are some examples of typical foods that are either high in histamine or cause an excessive release of histamine. This is not an exhaustive list, but is the foods people most commonly consume on a day-to-day basis.

Meat	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Processed meats</li> <li>• Smoked meats</li> <li>• Cured bacon</li> <li>• Fish and shellfish (fresh, frozen, smoked or canned)</li> <li>• Egg – a small quantity is allowed such as baked products</li> </ul>
Milk Products	<p>All fermented products, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cheese (Cheddar, Colby, Blue cheese, Brie, Camembert, Feta, Romano etc)</li> <li>• Cheese products such as processed slices, spreads</li> <li>• Cottage cheese, Ricotta cheese</li> <li>• Yoghurt</li> <li>• Buttermilk</li> <li>• Kefir</li> </ul>
Fruits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime</li> <li>• Cherries</li> <li>• Bananas</li> <li>• Strawberries, raspberries, cranberries</li> <li>• Apricots</li> <li>• Pineapple</li> <li>• Prunes</li> <li>• Dates</li> <li>• Raisins</li> <li>• Currents</li> </ul>
Vegetables	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tomatoes, tomato sauces,</li> <li>• Soy &amp; soy products</li> <li>• Spinach</li> <li>• Red beans</li> <li>• Eggplant</li> <li>• Olives in brine or vinegar</li> <li>• Pumpkin</li> <li>• Avocados</li> <li>• Pickles, relishes and all other foods containing vinegar</li> </ul>
Seasoning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cinnamon</li> <li>• Cloves</li> <li>• Anise</li> <li>• Nutmeg</li> <li>• Curry powder</li> <li>• Chilli powder</li> <li>• Vinegar</li> </ul>
Food additives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tartrazine – 102</li> <li>• Artificial food colourings</li> <li>• Benzoates – 210</li> <li>• Sulphites – 221</li> <li>• BHA (Butylated hydroxytoluene)</li> <li>• BHT (Butylated hydroxyanisole)</li> </ul>
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fermented soy products such as soy sauce and miso</li> <li>• Fermented foods such as sauerkraut</li> <li>• Tea (regular black teas and green)</li> <li>• Alcohol, Chocolate, cocoa and cola drinks</li> </ul>

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