

Histamine Avoidance Diet

Meat, poultry fish and eggs to avoid:

Fish, shellfish, seafood, anchovies, sardines. (Note that when fish and shell fish spoil, they can produce high concentrations of histamine which can cause a special case of histamine poisoning known as scombroid poisoning.) Avoid eggs except in pancakes, bread, cake etc. Processed, smoked or fermented meats: sandwich meat, sausage, weiner, bologna, salami, pepperoni, smoked ham, bacon. Chemically cured meats such as ham and meats are distinctly pink. Leftovers: Histamine is produced from bacterial action in leftover protein based food at room or refrigerator temperatures. Freeze leftovers to stop histamine production.

Milk Products to avoid:

Avoid fermented milk products such as cheeses, yogurt, buttermilk, sour cream. Cheeses include processed cheese, cheese slices and spreads. Avoid cheddar, Emmenthal, Harzer cheese, Gouda, Roquefort, Tilsiter, blue cheese, brie, camembert, feta, romano, cottage cheese and ricotta cheeses.

Fruits to avoid:

Orange, grapefruit, lemon, lime, cherries, grapes, apricots, avocados, raspberries, cranberries, prunes, dates, raisins, currants (fresh or dried). Bananas, papayas, pineapple, strawberries and tomatoes all release histamine.

Vegetables to avoid:

Tomatoes and tomato products like tomato sauces, catsup etc., soy products, spinach, red beans, eggplant, pumpkin. Olives, pickles, relish and other foods packed in vinegar or brine. Fermented vegetables like sauerkraut.

Alcoholic beverages to avoid:

Alcoholic drinks of all types should be avoided, including beer and wine. They release histamine.

Food additives to avoid:

Tartrazine and other food colours, preservatives especially benzoates and sulphites and yeast extract.

Seasonings to avoid:

Cinnamon, cloves, vinegar, chilli powder, anise, curry powder, nutmeg, soy sauce.

Beverages to avoid:

Tea (regular or green), chocolate, cocoa, cola drinks, de-alcoholized beverages like beer, ale wine, ciders.

Miscellaneous to avoid:

Fermented soy products - soy sauce, miso, fermented foods such as sauerkraut. chocolate, some nuts, vinegars, some oriental foods.

Toiletries and cosmetics to avoid:

Toiletries and cosmetics can contain histamine releasing substances that can cause contact allergies. Histamine releasing substances include cinnamaldehyde, balsam of peru, benzoates of any type, sulphites, and dyes.

Other triggers:

In addition to histamine producing or releasing foods, other natural food chemicals can trigger symptoms. It is important to realise that reactions to these substances are not due to allergy, and so allergy testing is of little use in helping us to decide what to avoid.

- Monosodium glutamate (MSG, 620, 621, "flavour enhancer") was originally isolated from seaweed in 1908 by a Japanese chemist. It also occurs naturally in such foods as camembert cheese, Parmesan cheese, tomatoes, soy sauce and mushrooms. MSG stimulates nerve endings, perhaps accounting for its function as a "flavour enhancer" amongst other properties.
- Vasoactive amines such as tyramine and serotonin are well known triggers of migraines in some patients and are present naturally in pineapples, bananas, baked meat, vegetables, red wine, wood-matured white wine, avocados, chocolate, citrus fruits and mature cheese. Amines can act directly on small blood vessels to expand their capacity, perhaps accounting for their effect on flushing, migraines and nasal congestion in some patients.
- Salicylates are aspirin like compounds (and aspirin was originally isolated from willow tree bark) present in a wide variety of herbs, spices as well as fruit and vegetables. Indeed, reactions to these may be even more common than reactions to artificial colours and preservatives. Aspirin can trigger hives (urticaria) by acting directly on skin mast cells. Natural and structurally similar salicylates can also worsen hives in some patients.
- Toxins - Other than contamination of food with micro-organisms or their products (spoilage, food poisoning), some foods contain toxins that can cause severe symptoms. For example, if some types of fish are stored poorly, their gut bacteria can convert histidine to histamine, resulting in allergy-like symptoms.
- Irritants - caffeine and curry are gut irritants and can trigger indigestion in some people.

Based on the book, ""Dietary Management of Food Allergies and Intolerances", Janice Vickerstaff Joneja and <http://allergies.about.com/cs/histamine/a/aa071000a.htm>