

Histamine-Rich & Histamine-Releasing Foods

Aged cheese	Olives
Anchovies	Papaya
Apricots	Peanuts
Artificial dyes	Pepperoni
Artificial preservatives	Pickles
Avocados	Pineapple
Bacon	Prunes
Bananas	Raisins
Beer	Raspberries
Buttermilk	Sardines
Cashews	Sauerkraut
Champagne	Smoked fish
Chocolate	Sour cream
Citrus fruits	Sour milk
Dates	Soy Sauce
Eggplant	Spinach
Figs	Strawberries
Goat cheese	Tomatoes
Hot dogs	Tuna
Kefir	Vinegar
Kombucha	Walnuts
Mackerel	Wheat germ
Mahi-mahi	Wine
Milk	Yogurt

What Is Histamine Intolerance?

To answer that question, first you have to know what histamines are. In the most basic sense, histamines are chemicals produced during any allergic response. When an allergen triggers the immune system, mast cells (a type of white blood cells) release histamines as part of the inflammatory immune reaction. It's this inflammation that gives you puffy, swollen eyes or a blistering skin rash. As well as being produced during the immune response, histamines can also be absorbed from histamine-containing foods, and produced by [bacteria](#) in the gut. In healthy people, the production and ingestion of histamines is balanced out by an enzyme called diamine oxidase (DAO), which breaks down the histamines. Some processes create

histamine; others destroy it, and overall the system balances out. But some people have a deficiency of DAO, so the histamines build up in their body, and cause a wide array of symptoms.

Many of these symptoms are familiar to allergy sufferers: rashes, hives, runny nose, swelling in the throat, and itching (with or without an accompanying rash). It's basically the same old inflammatory allergic response, only without an allergen. But an overload of histamine can also cause an enormous constellation of problems, including [migraines](#), digestive upset (constipation and/or diarrhea), nausea, and low [blood pressure](#).

An important point to remember about this is that even though it sometimes feels like hayfever, histamine intolerance **isn't like a regular allergy** where the allergic reaction is provoked by even a little bit of the substance. It's the buildup that matters. Think of histamine like water pouring into a sink. Most people have an emergency drain (DAO) that prevents the sink from overflowing. But people with histamine intolerance don't have that drain, so their sink eventually overflows.

Since the symptoms of histamine intolerance look like an allergy but aren't, researchers tend to describe the problem as a "pseudoallergy:" all the symptoms of an allergic reaction, but without any allergen there to set them off. When your body is overwhelmed with too much histamine, or can't clear histamine quickly enough, or both, you get an "allergic reaction" that isn't actually an allergy, often manifesting as one or more of the incredibly vague symptoms that everyone hates trying to diagnose.

<http://paleoleap.com/histamines/>

DAO is the main enzyme which breaks down histamine in the gut and is mainly a problem in handling histamine rich foods. Another enzyme, HNMT (Histamine N-methyl transferase) is the main way the liver metabolizes circulating histamine. Some people have a deficiency in the enzyme which can be picked up with genomic testing (such as 23andme.com). Probably more common are deficiencies in methylation. Methylation is also used to metabolize sex hormones and many other compounds. I generally recommend a week or two trial of the low histamine diet. But then I try to figure out where the problem lies. For some just increasing leafy greens can make a big difference.



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