



Histamine Food Triggers

Histamine plays many roles within the body. One of its most familiar roles is triggering allergic type reactions (e.g., runny nose, itching, hives).^{1,2} Histamine occurs naturally in many foods. A food may contribute to an individual's histamine load by containing histamine, releasing histamine, or inhibiting enzymes that break down histamine in the body.³ Avoiding foods that contain histamine may be recommended if there is reason to suspect that those foods are causing symptoms.

The amount of histamine in foods varies, and changes according to storage and age. Foods that may normally be low in histamine will have increasing amounts of histamine as they age, or ripen (e.g. a green tomato vs. a ripe tomato)³, especially those with higher protein content (e.g., leftover beef).⁷ To decrease histamine load, eat foods that have been freshly prepared and refrigerate or freeze leftovers immediately.⁴

Symptoms of Histamine Reactions:^{5,6}

- **Skin:** itching, redness, flushing, hives
- **Digestive:** gas, pain, diarrhea, nausea, vomiting
- **Respiratory:** difficulty breathing, runny nose, sneezing
- **Cardiac:** changes in blood pressure, abnormal heart rate
- **Nervous system:** headache, dizziness
- **Hormone:** menstrual pain and cramping

Category	Foods That Can Cause a Histamine Reaction ^{3,7-10}
Proteins	Cheeses: gouda, cheddar, Danish bleu, emmenthaler, goat cheese, gorgonzola, mascarpone, parmesan Seafood: herring, smoked mackerel, canned sardines, tuna, anchovy products, crustaceans Meat: sausage, pork, smoked meats Other: egg whites, tamari, tempeh, miso
Nuts & Seeds	All varieties of nuts, peanuts
Fats & Oils	Avocado, coconut, nut oils
Vegetables	Eggplant, spinach, sauerkraut, tomatoes
Fruits	Citrus, papaya, strawberries, pineapple, bananas
Grains	Wheat germ
Beverages, Spices & Condiments	Beverages: coffee, tea, beer, red wine Other: chocolate, ketchup, vinegar, licorice

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