

HISTAMINE

Histamines are neurotransmitters that are produced during any allergic response. Histamine's role in the body is to cause an immediate inflammatory response and serve as a warning sign to your immune system, notifying it of any potential attackers.

While this is normal and part of the body's natural immune response, if there's a prolonged period where you don't break down histamine properly, you could develop what's known as histamine intolerance.

The most common symptoms of histamine intolerance include: headaches, increased arousal, hypertension, vertigo/dizziness, body temperature and bowel irregularities, anxiety, nausea, cramps, flushing, difficulty breathing, hives, fatigue, tissue swelling, and irregular heart beats.

Foods high in histamine:

The biggest source of histamine in food isn't actually the food itself, it's the bacteria on the food that naturally produce histamine as part of their metabolic process. So, while we often hear that fermented foods do wonders for gut health (and they do), for those with histamine intolerance this is anything but true. In fact, even leftovers can occasionally have enough bacteria present to trigger symptoms.

Fermented Foods

Sauerkraut, Pickles & Kim Chi

Kombucha

Soy sauce, Tamari Sauce & Miso

Yeast containing foods e.g., beer, breads & cakes

Tempeh & Tofu

Proteins

Dairy products – milk & most cultured dairy e.g., cheeses, kefir, yoghurt, sour cream, buttermilk, cottage cheese & ricotta

Leftover meat – especially meat that has been stored in the fridge for >2 days

Fish – the longer after its been caught, the higher its histamine content – the worst are canned & tinned fish e.g., tuna, salmon & sardines

Shellfish – especially smoked or canned seafood

Processed, cured, smoked & fermented meats – e.g., sausages, salami, pepperoni & bacon

Long cooked bone broth

Nuts – especially walnuts & cashews

Eggs – especially egg whites

Beans & Legumes – chickpeas, soy beans & peanuts

Vegetables

Spinach

Eggplants

Pumpkin

Mushrooms

All tomato products

Olives in vinegar or brine

Red beans

Fruits

Dried fruits – prunes, cranberries, dates, figs, raisins, & currants

Most berries – strawberries & raspberries

Cherries

Plums

Apricots

Drinks

Alcohol of all types – especially wine & beer

Coffee beans (that are fermented)

Cola & Energy Drinks

Spices

Cinnamon, cloves, chili powder & anise

Nutmeg, curry powder, cayenne & cloves

Vinegar products – including apple cider vinegar, ketchup & mustard

Chocolate & Cocoa

All products containing cocoa & raw cacao

Artificial Colours & Preservatives

Especially benzoates & sulphites, nitrates, glutamate (MSG) & tartrazine