



Comprehensive Food Guide for Managing Histamine Levels

This guide is designed to help individuals reduce histamine intake, particularly useful for those with histamine intolerance, mast cell activation syndrome (MCAS), or other related sensitivities.

Understanding which foods are high, moderate, or low in histamine can empower clients to create a balanced, symptom-reducing meal plan.

What is Histamine?

Histamine is a natural compound involved in immune response, digestion, and the nervous system. It is found in certain foods and released by mast cells. When the body cannot effectively break down histamine due to reduced diamine oxidase (DAO) enzyme activity, histamine intolerance symptoms may arise, including headaches, rashes, digestive upset, or nasal congestion.

Categories of Histamine Foods

1. High-Histamine Foods

These foods either contain high levels of histamine or trigger the release of histamine in the body.

- **Fermented Foods:**
 - Sauerkraut
 - Kimchi
 - Kombucha
 - Pickles
 - Miso
 - Soy sauce, tamari
 - Vinegar (all types except distilled white)
- **Aged/Processed Proteins:**
 - Cured meats: salami, prosciutto, bacon, ham
 - Aged cheeses: cheddar, blue cheese, gouda
 - Smoked fish (salmon, mackerel)
 - Canned fish (tuna, sardines)
- **Alcoholic Beverages:**
 - Wine (red and sparkling in particular)
 - Beer
 - Champagne
- **Other High-Histamine Foods:**
 - Tomatoes
 - Eggplant
 - Spinach
 - Avocados (overripe)

- Bananas (overripe)
- Citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, limes, grapefruits)

2. Histamine Liberators

These foods don't contain high histamine levels but can trigger histamine release from mast cells.

- Strawberries
- Pineapples
- Papayas
- Nuts (cashews, walnuts, peanuts)
- Shellfish
- Chocolate
- Certain spices: chili, cinnamon, cloves

3. Low-Histamine Foods

These are generally safe for individuals managing histamine intolerance and can form the basis of a histamine-friendly diet.

- **Fresh Proteins:**
 - Freshly cooked chicken, turkey, beef, lamb, and pork
 - Fresh fish (consume immediately after purchase)
- **Vegetables:**
 - Zucchini
 - Carrots
 - Cucumber
 - Sweet potatoes
 - Broccoli
 - Cauliflower

- Lettuce
- **Fruits** (non-citrus, ripe but not overripe):
 - Apples
 - Pears
 - Blueberries
 - Watermelon
 - Mango
 - Cranberries

- **Grains:**
 - Rice (white or brown)
 - Quinoa
 - Oats
 - Millet
- **Dairy Alternatives:**
 - Coconut milk
 - Almond milk (unsweetened and additive-free)
 - Rice milk
- **Fats:**
 - Olive oil
 - Coconut oil
 - Avocado oil (for cooking, avoid overripe avocados)
- **Herbs and Seasonings:**
 - Basil
 - Parsley
 - Thyme
 - Rosemary

Tips for Managing Histamine in Food

1. Eat Fresh Foods:

- Histamine levels rise as food ages. Prioritize freshly prepared meals and consume leftovers within 24 hours (store them properly).

2. Avoid Fermented or Aged Products:

- These products naturally contain higher histamine levels.

3. Freeze Protein Immediately:

- If not cooking immediately, freeze meats and fish to prevent histamine accumulation.

4. Rotate Foods:

- Avoid eating the same high-histamine foods repeatedly to minimize histamine buildup.

Sample Low-Histamine Meal Plan

Breakfast

- Overnight oats made with unsweetened almond milk, fresh blueberries, and a drizzle of honey
- Herbal tea (e.g., chamomile or rooibos)

Lunch

- Grilled chicken breast with roasted zucchini and sweet potato
- Fresh apple slices on the side

Snack

- Carrot sticks with hummus (homemade without vinegar)

Dinner

- Pan-seared salmon (fresh, not smoked) with steamed broccoli and quinoa
- Fresh pear for dessert

Supplements to Support Histamine Intolerance

1. DAO Enzyme Supplements:

- Enhance the breakdown of histamine from foods.

2. Vitamin C:

- Helps degrade histamine and supports the immune system.

3. Quercetin:

- A natural antihistamine found in onions, apples, and supplements.

4. Magnesium:

- Stabilizes mast cells and reduces histamine release.

5. Probiotics:

- Focus on strains like *Bifidobacterium infantis* or *Lactobacillus rhamnosus*, which are less likely to produce histamine.

Conclusion

Managing histamine intolerance requires mindfulness in food choices and preparation. By focusing on low-histamine foods, avoiding histamine liberators, and incorporating supportive strategies, individuals can achieve symptom relief and maintain a balanced, nutritious diet.