



Histamine and Foods

Histamine is a natural substance produced by the body and is also present in many foods. It is released by the body during times of stress and allergy.

When histamine is released it may cause one or more of the following symptoms:

- Eyes to itch, burn, or become watery
- Nose to itch, sneeze, and produce more mucus
- Skin to itch, develop rashes or hives
- Sinuses to become congested and cause headaches
- Lungs to wheeze or have spasms
- Stomach to experience cramps and diarrhea

There are many foods that contain histamine or cause the body to release histamine when ingested. These types of reactions are food intolerances, and are different from food allergy in that the immune system is not involved in the reaction. The symptoms, however, can be the same as a food allergy.

Fermented foods may cause allergy symptoms because they are either rich in histamine or because yeast or mold is involved in the fermentation process.

Histamine-Rich Foods

- Alcoholic beverages, especially beer and wine.
- Anchovies
- Avocados
- Cheeses
- Cider and home-made root beer.
- Dried fruits such as apricots, dates, prunes, figs and raisins
- Eggplant
- Fermented foods, such as pickled or smoked meats, sauerkraut, etc.
- Mushrooms
- Processed meats - sausage, hot dogs, salami, etc.
- Sardines
- Smoked fish - herring, sardines, etc.
- Sour cream, sour milk, buttermilk, yogurt - especially if not fresh.
- Soured breads, such as pumpernickel, coffee cakes and other foods made with large amounts of yeast.
- Spinach
- Tomatoes
- Vinegar or vinegar-containing foods, such as mayonnaise, salad dressing, ketchup, chili sauce, pickles, pickled beets, relishes, olives.
- Yogurt

Histamine-Releasing Foods:

- Alcohol
- Bananas
- Chocolate
- Eggs
- Fish
- Milk
- Papayas
- Pineapple
- Shellfish
- Strawberries
- Tomatoes