



Comprehensive Guide on Histamine Intolerance



Jodie Studley

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I'm so pleased to share this comprehensive guide on histamine intolerance with you.

As your practitioner, my goal is to empower you with up-to-date information that's both easy to understand and practical to apply in your daily life.

You might be experiencing symptoms related to histamine, from digestive issues to skin flare-ups, headaches, or hormonal imbalances.

This resource is designed to help you identify potential triggers, make informed dietary choices, and discover supportive strategies through a functional medicine lens.

I've put this document together because I believe knowledge is a powerful tool for healing.

By understanding how histamine works in the body and the factors that can affect its breakdown, you can take meaningful steps toward improving your wellbeing.

I hope you find value in these tips, food lists, and protocols.

If you have any questions or need personalised guidance, please feel free to reach out.

In good health,

Jodie Studley
Naturopath
Cherish Natural Health



Understanding Histamine -the Geeky Stuff

Histamine is a naturally occurring compound found throughout the body. It serves multiple roles, including:

1. Immune System Regulation

- Acts as a first-line responder in allergic or inflammatory reactions.
- Released primarily by mast cells and basophils when the body perceives a threat (e.g., allergens, injury).
- Signals white blood cells to target the site of infection or injury.

2. Digestive Function

- Stimulates the release of stomach acid, aiding in the breakdown of food.
- Helps regulate intestinal motility and secretions.

3. Nervous System Communication

- Functions as a neurotransmitter in the brain.
- Affects alertness, wakefulness, and appetite.

4. Inflammation and Repair

- Increases blood vessel permeability, allowing immune cells to move quickly to areas that need healing.
- Swelling, redness, and warmth at an injury site often result from histamine activity.

Histamine Breakdown

- Diamine Oxidase (DAO): The main enzyme that metabolises dietary histamine in the gut.
- Histamine N-Methyltransferase (HNMT): Primarily breaks down histamine in the central nervous system.

When histamine accumulates—due to high intake, inadequate breakdown, or excessive release—it can lead to a condition often referred to as histamine intolerance. In women, hormonal fluctuations can further exacerbate histamine overload. Elevated estrogen can amplify histamine activity, while low progesterone may reduce DAO function, creating a cycle of persistent symptoms.

Histamine Receptors

- H1 Receptors: Found in smooth muscles and endothelial cells. Responsible for allergic symptoms like itching, swelling, and vasodilation.
- H2 Receptors: Located mostly in the stomach, where they regulate acid secretion. Also present in the heart and some immune cells.
- H3 Receptors: Primarily in the central nervous system, modulating neurotransmitter release and influencing sleep-wake cycles.
- H4 Receptors: Found in bone marrow and white blood cells, influencing immune cell migration and inflammation.



Symptoms of Histamine Intolerance

- **Neurological:** Headaches, migraines, dizziness, anxiety, difficulty concentrating.
- **Skin:** Hives, itching, flushing, eczema, rosacea.
- **Respiratory:** Nasal congestion, sneezing, difficulty breathing.
- **Gastrointestinal:** Bloating, diarrhea, nausea, stomach pain.
- **Cardiovascular:** Heart palpitations, low blood pressure, fainting.
- **Hormonal:** Worsening of PMS, heavy periods, and worsened menopausal symptoms.

Updated Research Overview and Functional Medicine Approach

Recent functional medicine research emphasises a comprehensive approach to managing histamine intolerance through:

1. **Dietary Adjustments:** Identifying and minimizing high-histamine foods, histamine liberators, and DAO blockers.
2. **Nutrient Support for DAO:** Ensuring adequate vitamins and minerals that support DAO activity (Vitamin C, Vitamin B6, copper, zinc).
3. **Gut Microbiome Health:** Restoring gut balance, since certain bacteria can produce or degrade histamine.
4. **Hormonal Balance:** Addressing elevated estrogen or low progesterone, both of which can worsen histamine issues.
5. **Stress Management:** High stress can increase histamine release and reduce DAO function.
6. **Lifestyle:** Adequate sleep, moderate exercise, and avoiding environmental allergens.

Foods to Avoid:

(Ranked from Highest to Lowest Histamine Content)

Extremely High Histamine Foods: (Avoid Completely):

Fermented Foods: Sauerkraut, kimchi, pickles, soy sauce, tamari, fish sauce, miso, kombucha.

Aged Cheeses: Parmesan, cheddar, Gouda, blue cheese.

Cured and Processed Meats: Salami, ham, bacon, sausages, prosciutto.

Alcohol: Red wine, beer (especially wheat beer), champagne.

Seafood: Canned fish (tuna, sardines), smoked salmon, mackerel, anchovies.

Vinegars: Wine vinegar, balsamic vinegar, apple cider vinegar.

Leftover Foods: Cooked foods stored for long periods.

Condiments: Vegemite, Marmite, and other yeast spreads.

High Histamine Foods: (Limit Consumption):

Certain Vegetables: Eggplant, spinach, tomatoes, avocados.

Certain Fruits: Strawberries, kiwi, pineapple, bananas, citrus fruits.

Chocolate and Cocoa Products.

Nuts: Walnuts, cashews, peanuts.

Legumes: Soybeans, chickpeas, lentils, kidney beans.

Beverages: Black tea, green tea, energy drinks.

Condiments and Additives: Ketchup, mustard, glutamates, benzoates.

Moderate Histamine Foods: (Caution):

Fresh Fish: Tuna, cod, haddock (consume as soon as possible).

Fresh Meats: Pork, chicken (avoid aged or marinated).

Fresh Dairy: Milk, cream cheese (check individual tolerance).

Fruits: Apples, blueberries, cherries, mangoes, melons.

Vegetables: Cucumbers, carrots, zucchini, capsicums.

Soy Products: Tofu, edamame (monitor tolerance).

Histamine Liberators: (Trigger Body to Release Histamine)

- Citrus fruits (oranges, lemons, limes).
- Tomatoes and avocados.
- Pineapple and bananas.
- Chocolate and nuts.

DAO-Blocking Foods (Interfere with Histamine Breakdown):

- Alcohol (red wine, beer, spirits).
- Black and green tea.
- Energy drinks containing theobromine.
- Cocoa and chocolate.

Low-Histamine Foods (Safer Choices)

Proteins:

Freshly cooked poultry, lamb, and beef.

Fresh fish (e.g., cod, sole).

Eggs (mainly egg yolk).

Vegetables:

Broccoli, cauliflower, green beans.

Potatoes, sweet potatoes, squash, zucchini.

Leafy greens (except spinach).

Fruits:

Pears, apples, blueberries, cranberries.

Mango, papaya, melons (cantaloupe, honeydew).

Grains and Starches:

Rice, quinoa, oats.

Corn and rice-based pasta.

Beverages:

Herbal teas (chamomile, peppermint).

Non-dairy milk (coconut, rice, almond—check for additives).

Filtered water.

Fats:

Olive oil, coconut oil, ghee, avocado oil (if tolerated).

Butter (if not sensitive to dairy)



Functional Medicine Protocols & Natural Health Strategies

Nutrient Support

Vitamin C (e.g., from whole foods or supplements) can help stabilize mast cells.

Vitamin B6 is a cofactor for DAO, supporting histamine breakdown.

Magnesium may help reduce histamine release and ease stress.

Omega-3 Fatty Acids (found in fish oil, flaxseed) to reduce inflammation.

Quercetin (in onions, apples, or supplement form) may reduce histamine release.

Probiotics & Gut Health

- Strains like *Lactobacillus rhamnosus* and *Bifidobacterium longum* may help break down dietary histamine.
- Avoid strains that produce histamine (e.g., some *Lactobacillus casei* strains).

Follow your personalised practitioner gut protocols.

Hormonal Balancing

- Address estrogen dominance by supporting liver detoxification (e.g., with cruciferous vegetables, adequate protein).
- Ensure adequate progesterone levels if indicated.

Stress Management

- Stress can deplete nutrients and aggravate histamine-related issues.

Techniques: Mindfulness, meditation, yoga, or gentle exercise.

Allergy Testing

- Consider functional testing for food intolerances, gut dysbiosis, and hormone levels.

Lifestyle Considerations

Sleep: 7–9 hours nightly. Poor sleep can elevate inflammatory markers.

Exercise: Moderate intensity is beneficial; avoid overexertion which can spike histamine release.

Environment: Keep an eye on seasonal allergens, dust, and mold that can elevate histamine.

Practical Tips for Managing Histamine Intolerance

Cook Fresh: Avoid leftovers; histamine builds up in stored food.

Read Labels: Watch for hidden additives like sulfites, nitrates, and benzoates.

Support DAO Enzyme Activity: Supplement with DAO enzyme or nutrients like vitamin C, zinc, and magnesium. Speak with Jodie to understand suitability and dosages.

Limit Trigger Foods: Test tolerance to moderate-histamine foods and eliminate as needed.

Focus on Gut Health: A healthy gut microbiome can improve histamine tolerance.

Track Symptoms: Keep a food and symptom diary to identify triggers.

Seek Expert Guidance: Work with your doctor and Naturopath for a functional medicine testing and tailored protocols.

When to Seek Professional Help

If you experience severe or persistent symptoms, consult your qualified practitioner. Tests may include:

Hormone Panels to check estrogen and progesterone balance.

Gut Microbiome Analysis to detect histamine-producing bacteria.

Nutrient Profiles for DAO cofactors.

Allergy Testing (IgE, IgG) to confirm food sensitivities.

Conclusion

Managing histamine intolerance requires a multifaceted approach—balancing hormones, supporting gut health, avoiding triggers, and ensuring ample DAO and nutrient support.

With updated functional medicine research and natural health strategies, it's possible to significantly reduce symptoms, improve overall wellbeing, and regain quality of life, especially during periods of hormonal transition such as perimenopause and menopause.



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Disclaimer: This guide is for educational purposes only. Consult with your doctor or reach out to Jodie for a more personalised natural approach and advice. Recommendations in this handout may vary based on individual health status and local Australian regulations or guidelines.