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# 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).<sup>1,2</sup> 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.<sup>3</sup> Avoiding foods that contain histamine may be recommended if there is reason to suspect that those foods are causing symptoms.*

## SYMPTOMS OF HISTAMINE REACTIONS<sup>4,5</sup>

- **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

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## Histamine in Foods

The amount of histamine in foods varies and changes according to storage and age. Foods that normally may be low in histamine will have increasing amounts of histamine as they age or ripen (e.g., a green tomato vs. a ripe tomato), especially those with higher protein content (e.g., leftover beef).<sup>3</sup> To decrease histamine load, eat foods that have been freshly prepared, and refrigerate or freeze leftovers immediately.<sup>6</sup>

Here are foods that can cause a histamine reaction:<sup>3,7-10</sup>

- **Cheeses:** Gouda, cheddar, Danish bleu, Emmenthaler (Swiss cheese), goat cheese, Gorgonzola, mascarpone, Parmesan
- **Seafood:** herring, smoked mackerel, canned sardines, tuna, anchovy products, crustaceans
- **Meats:** sausage, pork, smoked meats
- **Other Proteins:** 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:** coffee, tea, beer, red wine
- **Condiments:** ketchup, vinegar
- **Other:** chocolate, licorice



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