

Low Histamine Diet (Optional Symptom-Guided Approach)

You may have heard about a “low-histamine diet” as a strategy to manage symptoms such as flushing, headaches, gastrointestinal discomfort, or worsening fatigue. It is important to note that **“histamine intolerance” is not a well-established or universally accepted diagnosis in allopathic medicine**, and the scientific evidence supporting low-histamine diets is limited and evolving.

That said, some individuals report that certain foods appear to worsen their symptoms. For this reason, a **carefully monitored, symptom-guided dietary trial** may be reasonable in select cases.

Important Principles Before You Start

- This is **not a required treatment** and may not be helpful for everyone.
- The goal is **not strict elimination**, but rather **careful observation of patterns**.
- Highly restrictive diets can be **nutritionally inadequate** and may increase risk for **disordered eating patterns or food anxiety**.
- If you have a history of restrictive eating, weight loss, or difficulty maintaining nutrition, **this approach should be used with caution or avoided**.
- Whenever possible, this should be done with guidance from your clinician and/or a registered dietitian.

Foods Sometimes Reported to Trigger Symptoms

Some people report symptoms with the following foods, though evidence is inconsistent and highly individualized:

- Aged or fermented foods (e.g., aged cheeses, kimchi, yogurt)
- Alcohol (especially wine and beer)
- Processed or preserved meats
- Certain fruits (e.g., citrus, strawberries, pineapple)
- Tomatoes, spinach, eggplant
- Vinegar-containing or pickled foods
- Chocolate
- Certain nuts (e.g., walnuts, cashews, peanuts)
- Leftovers stored for prolonged periods

Important: These foods are **not inherently harmful** and should **not be broadly eliminated unless clearly associated with symptoms**.

How to Approach This Diet

Instead of eliminating all food high in histamine, consider:

- Starting with a **short trial (2–4 weeks)** of 1-2 foods you associate with symptoms
- Tracking symptoms in relation to meals
- Reintroducing foods systematically to assess tolerance

The emphasis should remain on **adequate nutrition, flexibility, and sustainability**.

Examples of Foods Often Considered Lower in Histamine

These foods are sometimes better tolerated by some individuals, though responses vary:

- Gluten-free grains: rice, quinoa, millet, buckwheat
- Fresh (unprocessed) meats
- Fresh or flash-frozen fish
- Non-citrus fruits: apples, blueberries, mangoes, peaches
- Non-dairy milk (almond, coconut, hemp)
- Most fresh vegetables (individual tolerance varies)
- Olive oil, coconut oil
- Seeds (flax, chia)
- Some dairy (if tolerated): fresh cheeses such as ricotta or mozzarella

Note: Freshness may matter more than the specific food itself for some individuals.

Key Takeaways

- **Individual responses vary widely.** A food that worsens symptoms for one person may be well tolerated by another.
- The goal is to **identify personal patterns**, not to follow a rigid list.
- Avoid **over-restriction**, as this can lead to:
 - Nutritional deficiencies
 - Reduced caloric intake
 - Increased stress around food
 - Risk of **disordered eating behaviors**

When to Stop or Reassess

Please contact your clinician if:

- You are eating less or losing weight unintentionally
- You feel more fatigued or unwell on the diet
- You develop anxiety around food choices
- The diet becomes difficult to maintain

Helpful Strategies

- Keep a simple food and symptom diary
- Focus on **balanced meals** rather than restriction
- Reintroduce foods regularly to test tolerance
- Prioritize **adequate caloric and protein intake**

Resources (Optional)

Food/symptom diary template:

<https://www.histamineintolerance.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/food-diary.pdf>

General overview:

<https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/low-histamine-diet>

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