

# LOW HISTAMINE DIET

## What is the Low Histamine Diet?

This diet was developed for people with suspected and diagnosed histamine intolerance (HIT), which is the inability to break down histamine-containing foods and beverages in the gut. HIT is thought to be due to a deficiency of the gut enzyme diamine oxidase (DAO). There is no agreed upon standard for diagnosing HIT. Having a positive response to a low histamine diet is currently considered the most reliable indicator of HIT.

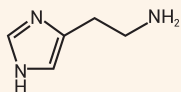
HIT symptoms commonly include functional GI symptoms like bloating, fullness after meals and abdominal pain. Other GI symptoms related to HIT include diarrhea, abdominal pain, and constipation. HIT may also cause cardiovascular symptoms (headaches, dizziness), respiratory symptoms (runny nose, congestion), and skin symptoms (flushing, rash, itching).

The purpose of a low histamine diet is not only to reduce exposure to high histamine-containing foods but also to foods/beverages that may compete with the DAO enzyme or cause the body's own histamine levels to rise. It is important to note that histamine intolerance is not the same as a food allergy, which is a specific immune system response. A low histamine diet will not treat a food allergy.

## DEVELOPED BY

Currently, there is no scientific agreement on a standardized Low Histamine Diet. Only within the last 10-20 years have several different international academic and scientific groups begun investigating the role of histamine intolerance and developing prototypes for a dietary protocol.

## Consider This Diet with the Following Conditions



Diagnosed histamine intolerance



IBS-like disorders including non-celiac wheat sensitivity and SIBO



Headaches and migraines



A person exhibiting a combination of several HIT symptoms

## POTENTIAL BENEFITS

Reduction and possible elimination of HIT symptoms

## POTENTIAL RISKS

- This is a restrictive diet and should be avoided by or used with extreme caution by anyone with an eating disorder
- May be difficult to follow without expert coaching
- Increased financial costs related to any therapeutic diet

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## How to Advise



Currently, there is no agreed upon recommended duration for following a low histamine diet. Studies have shown successful reduction of HIT symptoms following a **low histamine diet after 2-weeks and for as long as 18-months.**



Because several medications may influence DAO activity and HIT-related symptoms, it is important to **do a careful review of all medication and supplement use** while on a low histamine diet.



**Food storage and preparation can influence the amount of dietary histamine.** To reduce histamine content, choose the freshest form of food possible (especially with animal-based protein), have caution with reheating foods, and limit products with a long storage time.

## DAO

**Oral supplementation with a DAO enzyme** may also be recommended during a low histamine diet.

## Foods to LIMIT or AVOID on a Low Histamine Diet:



Canned or preserved fish



Vinegar and pickled vegetables



Dry-cured or fermented meat



Yeast extract



Matured or aged cheese



Fruit: strawberries, pineapple, banana, pears, grapefruit, raspberries, kiwi, oranges, papaya



Any fermented food or beverage (sauerkraut, kimchi, kombucha, kefir, yogurt, sour cream, seitan, tempeh, soy sauce, fish sauce)



Legumes: soy products, lentils, beans



Alcohol



Tomatoes, spinach, eggplant, avocados



Chocolate, cocoa, tea, mate

## References

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2. Laura Maintz, Natalija Novak, Histamine and histamine intolerance, *The American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*, Volume 85, Issue 5, May 2007, Pages 1185–1196.
3. Schnedl WJ, Enko D. Histamine Intolerance Originates in the Gut. *Nutrients*. 2021 Apr 12;13(4):1262.