HISTAMINE

Are you histamine intolerant?
Do you frequently suffer allergy type symptoms such as sneezing, sinus issues, asthma, eczema, nasal congestion, lots of mucous, hives or other types of itchy skin or skin flushing? How about non-allergic type symptoms such as headaches, rapid heart rate, anxiety, depression, panicked or panic attacks? Histamine could be the culprit.

Histamine, what is it?
Histamine is mostly recognised for its role in allergies but it does do other things in our body. The effect it has depends on which receptor it binds to (there are four) which are located all over the body and concentrated in certain areas such as the brain, heart, skin, lungs and stomach.

We do actually need histamine, as it's required for so many bodily functions, but it's when we have too much of it that problems occur and we become histamine intolerant. If we have too much in our body at any time, as there are histamine receptors located everywhere, we see a broad range of symptoms that can be associated (often unknowingly) with histamine overload:

- low blood pressure
- feeling dizzy or faint on standing
- heartburn or other digestive symptoms such as diarrhoea or abdominal pain
- exercise induced asthma or other symptoms brought on by exercising (can also be adrenal related)
- nausea or motion sickness
- excessive sweating – whole body or just hands/feet
- hot flushes (that aren't hormonal)
- fatigue – chronic
- excessive need to urinate – day or night
- anxiety, insomnia, panic attacks
- feeling overstimulated and can't switch off
- feeling restless or irritated
- depressed or low mood
- nausea & vomiting
- recurring blood noses
- and so much more (according to each individual)

So how do we get too much?
Histamine intolerance is common because there are so many factors that contribute to the balance being tipped. These include:

- **foods** - we consume too many foods high in histamine
- **gut microbiome** – certain gut bacteria produce a lot of histamine so gut work is essential because this is constantly pumping out histamine into our system
- **genetics** – we can have what is called a SNP in our some of our genes and this affects how we breakdown histamine. Genes involved in histamine degradation are – DAO, HNMT, MTHFR and MAO
- **nutrient deficiencies** – often caused by not absorbing nutrients at the gut level and mostly involved in aiding the above genes to function optimally. Nutrients include copper, B vitamins, methionine and zinc
- **medications** - some medications increase histamine
- **your environment** – this comes back to allergies, if you're constantly being exposed to things you are allergic to i.e. pollens, dust, cat/dog etc then your body will be releasing histamine all the time

Do you find that you can't work out what you're allergic to because sometimes you can have that food and feel fine, and the next time you go to eat it, you react? We can think of histamine in our body as a bucket that overflows when too much of the above is happening. Once we 'drain' the bucket our tolerance improves and we not only notice an improvement in our symptoms but we also see that we can cope with a few extra foods that previously we couldn't.

When it comes to the food list below, you may not have to avoid all things listed under the 'high' section. It's about figuring out how full your 'bucket' is and once drained you'll find you can cope with a bit more on the list, but always judge by your symptoms. The aim is to have no reactive symptoms, so match that with the level of foods you can consume.

Addressing the cause
There are a number of factors that can cause histamine reactions and you can do things to support your body's response to histamine over time.

- **Gut**: It's really important to heal your gut so it stops contributing to your histamine bucket load and you can eat freely and healthily without restrictions.
- **Nutritional deficiencies:** You may need to supplement with the nutrients listed above to optimise the genes involved in reducing your histamine load.
- **Allergies**: Get on top of these, do you know what they are?
- **Stress:** Contributes to histamine levels in the body, so it's important to address this both internally and externally

Please reach out for an appointment or a free 15 minute phone consult to get the clarity and help you need.

LOW HISTAMINE FOODS

These foods have the least amount of histamine, and can be consumed in moderate amounts when on a low histamine diet. Low histamine level foods:

- fresh meat - chicken, duck, lamb, liver, pork, turkey
- fresh seafood - scallops and salmon - if frozen within 30mins, anything fresh
- egg yolk
- grains – anything gluten free
- dairy – A2 milk, butter - without the histamine generating rancidity, cream, cream cheese, ghee, goats milk, ricotta, sheep
- milk substitutes – coconut cream and milk, rice milk
- most cooking oils
- herbal teas – some exceptions
- vegetables - artichoke, asparagus, basil, bean sprouts, beets, bok choy, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chives, coriander, corn, cucumber, dandelion greens, fennel, garlic, ginger, green split peas, kale, leafy greens, leeks, lettuce, mint, onions, parsley, parsnips, potato, radishes, rhubarb, swede, squash, sweet potato, zucchini
- fruit - apple, apricot, blackberry, blueberry, rock melon, honeydew melon, cherries, cranberry, currants, dragon fruit, figs, grapes, guava, kiwifruit, mango, nectarine, passion fruit, peach, pear, persimmon, pomegranate, raspberries (limit to ¼ cup)
- beans and lentils – if dried and soaked overnight first
- tinned legumes
- nuts & seeds – almonds, brazil, chia, chestnuts, flax, hazelnuts, hemp, macadamia, pecans, pine nuts, pistachio, poppy, pumpkin, sesame, sunflower
- fresh coconut meat
- sweeteners – inulin, maple syrup, monk fruit, stevia, camu camu, coconut sugar
- drinks – fresh juices on allowed fruits and vege, coffee, water
- the best tolerated alcohol – top shelf plain vodka, gin, white rum, silver tequila

HIGH HISTAMINE FOODS

When it comes to foods high in histamine the main thing to remember is fresh is best and the older the food the higher the histamine content. So think leftovers, tinned, canned and pickled and fermented foods. High histamine foods include:

- alcohol
- pickled or canned foods – sauerkrauts, kimchi
- matured cheeses
- cured meat products – salami, ham, sausages, bacon, pepperoni, luncheon, hot dogs
- beef
- fish and shellfish that's not fresh
- nuts – walnuts, cashew nuts, peanuts
- chocolates and other cocoa based products
- vinegar
- ready meals
- salty snacks, sweets with preservatives and artificial colourings
- vegetables – eggplant, green beans, string beans, mushrooms, peas, spinach, tomato, avocado, pumpkin
- fruit - banana, dates, dried fruit, grapefruit, citrus, papaya, pawpaw, pineapple, plums, prunes, raisins, strawberries
- raw egg ie mayonnaise
- beans and lentils – if tinned, soy beans/edamame,
- coconut – dried, butter
- soy beans – edamame, tofu, tempeh
- spices – anise, cinnamon, chilli, cloves, curry, cayenne, MSG, mustard, nutmeg, paprika, pepper
- sweeteners – honey, sugar, icing sugar
- condiments – Braggs liquid aminos, carob, chocolate, cocoa, coconut aminos, collagen, gelatin, gherkins, miso, nutritional yeast, soy sauce, tamari, vinegars
- drinks – beer, carbonated drinks, cider, cocoa, coconut water, kombucha, tea – black, gree, white, wine, all alcohol in general

Histamine liberators
These foods do not contain high levels of histamine themselves but can initiate a release of histamine from the mast cells:

- most citric fruits – kiwi, lemon, lime, pineapple, plums...
- cocoa and chocolate
- nuts
- papaya
- beans and pulses
- tomatoes
- wheat germ
- additives – benzoate, sulphites, nitrites, glutamate, food dyes

Diamine Oxidase (DAO) blockers:
- alcohol
- black tea
- energy drinks
- green tea
- mate tea

Debatable:
- yoghurt – depends on the bacteria culture used
- egg white – it is a histamine liberator only when in its raw state

Other:
- yeast – even though it does not contain histamine as such, yeast serves as a catalyst for histamine generation during manufacture. There is no yeast in the end product.

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