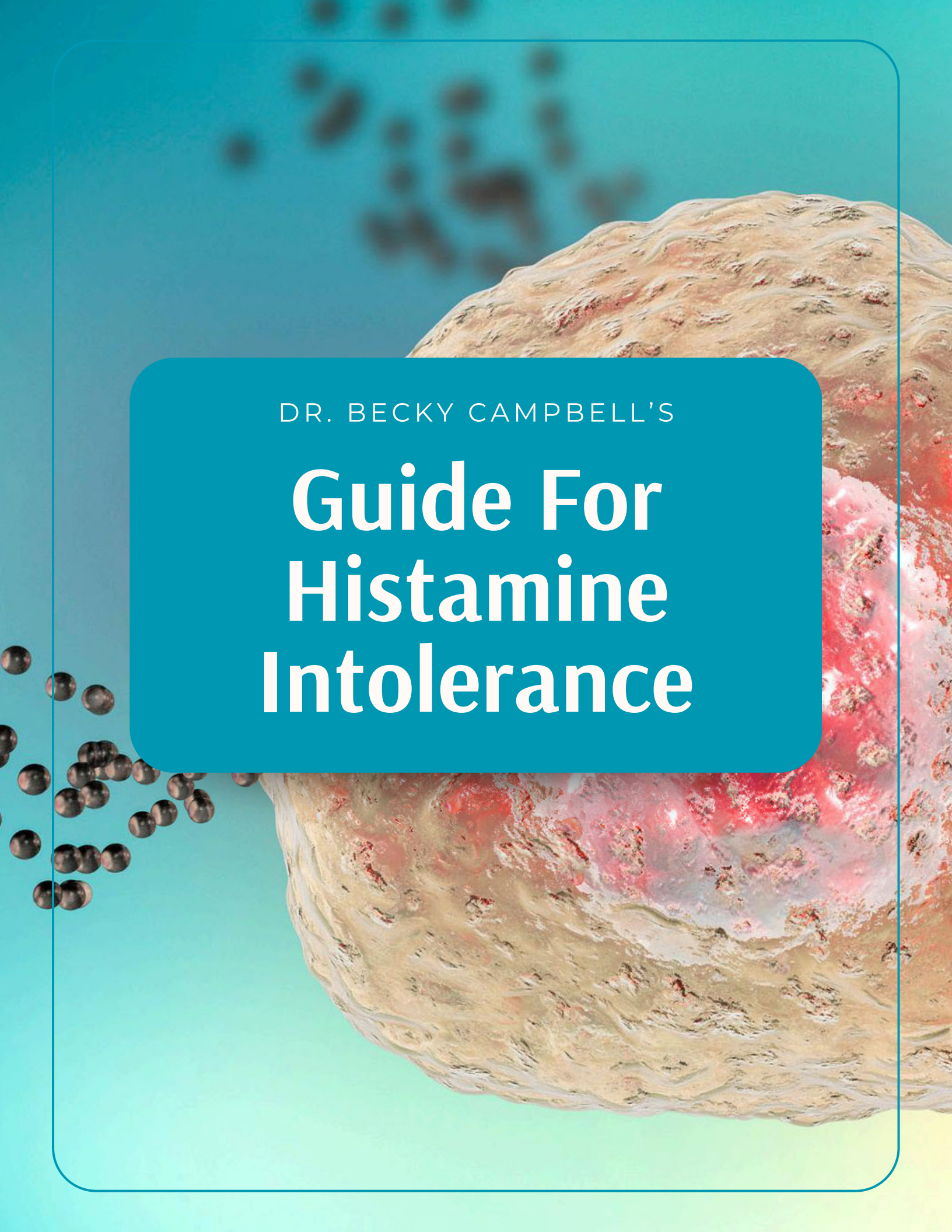




DR. BECKY CAMPBELL'S

# Guide For Histamine Intolerance

If you're here, you're probably dealing with symptoms that feel confusing, frustrating, or just plain exhausting. Maybe it's the bloating that won't go away, the headaches that hit after certain meals, the itchy skin, or the anxious buzz in your body that no one seems to take seriously.

You might've been told it's all in your head. Or that it's just hormones. Or just stress.

Maybe you've even tried cutting out foods, taking antihistamines, or doing "all the right things" and still don't feel like yourself.

That's often the reality with histamine intolerance. It's not a fad. It's not rare. And it's not something your body is doing to punish you.

Histamine intolerance is a sign that your system is out of balance.

Not forever—but for right now.

And, like most things in functional medicine, it didn't start overnight, and it won't be resolved with a quick fix. But you can feel better, and this guide will help you understand where to start and why your symptoms finally make sense.

*Dr. Becky Campbell*

# What Is Histamine Intolerance?

Histamine intolerance isn't an allergy, and it's not just a food sensitivity. It's a breakdown in balance, specifically, the balance between how much histamine your body is exposed to and how well you can clear it out.

Histamine is a naturally occurring compound that plays several important roles. It helps regulate digestion, supports your immune system, acts as a chemical messenger in the brain, and even helps your body respond to injury.

In other words, histamine isn't bad. You need it to function.

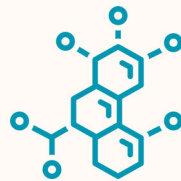
But like most things in the body, balance is key.

When histamine builds up faster than your body can break it down, that's when symptoms start to show up. This buildup can happen because you're exposed to too much histamine (through food, gut bacteria, or environmental triggers) or because your body isn't clearing it effectively.

**Two enzymes handle most of that clearing work:**



**Diamine oxidase (DAO):** Works in the gut to break down histamine from food or microbial sources



**Histamine-N-methyltransferase (HNMT):** Works inside cells, especially in the liver and central nervous system, to break down histamine already in circulation

When either of these enzymes is underfunctioning, or when there's simply more histamine coming in than they can manage, it creates a kind of "histamine traffic jam."

And because histamine receptors exist all over the body, this can lead to symptoms in nearly every system: digestive, neurological, respiratory, cardiovascular, and hormonal.

You might feel this as migraines, nausea, bloating, itchy skin, anxiety, insomnia, or even a rapid heartbeat. It doesn't always look the same from person to person, which is part of what makes histamine intolerance so easy to miss.

Remember, your body isn't broken. It's just overwhelming. And with the right support, you can start to clear the excess and calm the symptoms.

***You don't need to have a textbook case for histamine intolerance to be affecting your health. Because histamine acts on so many systems in the body, the symptoms can be wide-ranging, inconsistent, and easy to overlook.***

***However, there are patterns, and understanding how histamine intolerance tends to show up in real life is the first step toward making sense of what you've been feeling.***

# Common Symptoms of Histamine Intolerance

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There's no single "tell" when it comes to histamine intolerance. For some, it's a headache after wine. For others, it's itchy skin, sudden bloating, or a racing heart that seems to come out of nowhere.

What makes it especially tricky is that symptoms can shift depending on your hormones, stress, or even the freshness of your food.

The pattern is often subtle at first. A few foods start bothering you. Sleep feels off. You're more sensitive to smells, heat, or bright lights. Eventually, your body feels reactive more often than not, and it's hard to tell what's triggering what.

**Here are some of the most common symptoms people experience:**

## Neurological

- Headaches or migraines
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Anxiety, irritability, or feeling "wired but tired"
- Sleep disturbances or insomnia

## Digestive

- Bloating or abdominal discomfort
- Diarrhea, nausea, or acid reflux
- Cramping after meals
- Food sensitivities that seem to be multiplying

## Skin + Immune

- Flushing, hives, or itching
- Rashes, eczema, or breakouts
- Red or watery eyes
- Swelling of the face, lips, or other tissues

## Cardiovascular + Respiratory

- Rapid heart rate or palpitations
- Blood pressure fluctuations (especially low BP)
- Nasal congestion or sneezing
- Shortness of breath, throat tightness

## Hormonal + Other

- Premenstrual symptoms that feel more intense
- Fatigue that doesn't improve with rest
- Histamine "hangover" the day after eating or drinking certain foods
- Heightened sensitivity to heat, smells, or stress



## REMINDER:

Not everyone will experience all of these symptoms. And some may come and go without warning. But if you've noticed a pattern, or if these symptoms seem to flare with food, hormones, or stress, histamine intolerance could be part of the picture.

# Histamine Intolerance Symptoms

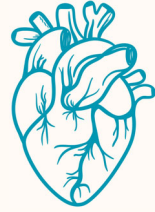
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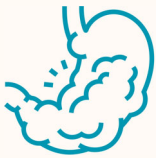
**Headaches or  
migraines**



**Flush or skin rashes**



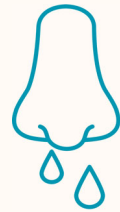
**Fast heart rate or  
palpitations**



**Bloating or digestive  
discomfort**



**Anxiety**



**Nasal congestion or  
runny nose**



**Diarrhea**



**Insomnia**



**Dizziness or  
lightheadedness**



**Fatigue**



**Heightened  
sensitivity to heat or  
stress**



**Eczema**



**Nausea after eating**



**Irregular menstrual  
cycle**

# What's Causing Your Histamine Overload?

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By now, you've probably seen yourself in at least a few of those symptoms. The next question is the one that matters most: why is this happening in the first place?

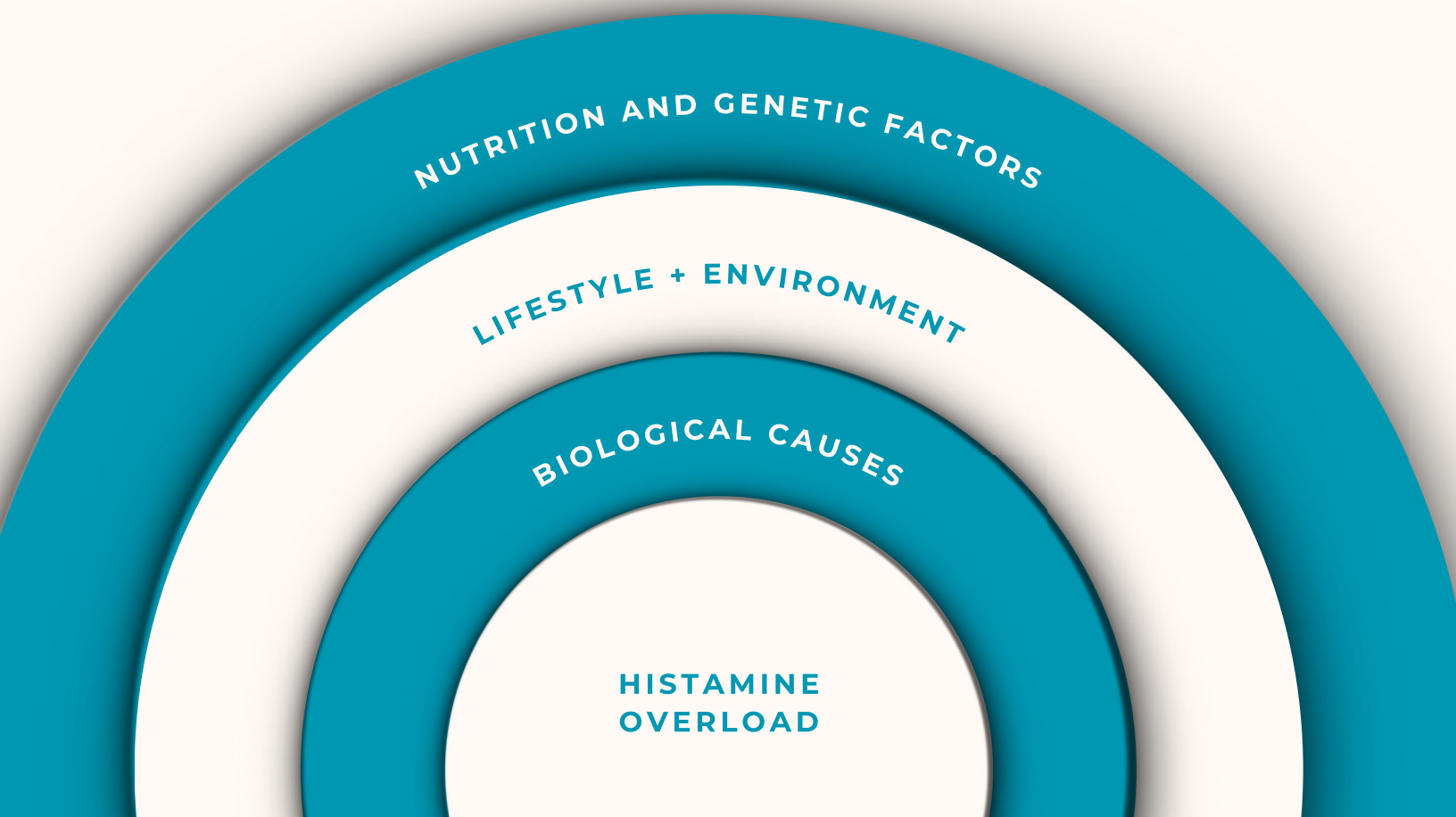
Histamine intolerance doesn't just show up out of nowhere. In functional medicine, we look at it as a downstream effect – your body's way of signaling that something deeper is off.

Maybe your gut isn't clearing histamine the way it should.

Maybe your immune system is in overdrive.

Maybe your hormones, nervous system, or detox pathways are overloaded and struggling to keep up.

Here are some of the most common root causes we see behind histamine buildup, and these are the things we often test for in our virtual practice:



1

### **MCAS**

MCAS happens when your mast cells, the immune cells that release histamine, are overly sensitive or easily triggered. Instead of responding just to real threats, these cells react to harmless things in your environment or body, flooding your system with histamine and other inflammatory chemicals. This creates widespread, unpredictable symptoms that often overlap with histamine intolerance but go beyond food reactions alone.

2

### **Gut Dysfunction**

Your gut is where histamine from food or bacteria is supposed to be broken down, mainly by the enzyme DAO. However, when the gut lining is inflamed due to dysbiosis, leaky gut, SIBO, or infections, DAO production often decreases. This slows down histamine clearance, allowing more of it to leak into the circulation.

3

### **Chronic Infections**

Certain microbes like *H. pylori*, *Candida*, or even tick-borne infections like Lyme can either produce histamine or trigger mast cell activation. Infections like these keep the immune system on high alert and often contribute to long-term inflammation and reactivity.

4

### **Liver Detox Impairment**

Your liver plays a crucial role in breaking down and clearing histamine, particularly through phase I and phase II detoxification pathways. If those pathways are sluggish, due to toxin exposure, inflammation, chronic stress, or low nutrient availability, histamine can build up more quickly than your body can eliminate it. A sluggish liver can also slow down the clearance of estrogen and other histamine-raising hormones, adding to the overall burden.

5

### **Nutrient Deficiencies**

Breaking down histamine requires key nutrients, especially vitamin B6, vitamin C, copper, and magnesium. These are easy to become deficient in when digestion is impaired or when your body is chronically stressed. Low methylation support can also impair HNMT activity, the enzyme responsible for breaking down histamine inside cells.

6

### **Environmental Toxins and Mold Exposure**

Mold and other biotoxins can directly activate mast cells and suppress detox pathways, leading to a much higher histamine load. Even if you're avoiding trigger foods, this can keep the body in a state of constant reactivity.

7

### **Hormonal Imbalances**

Estrogen can increase histamine levels, and histamine can, in turn, increase estrogen. This feedback loop is why many people notice symptoms get worse around ovulation or before their period. Poor detoxification or hormone clearance can make this worse over time.

8

### **Genetics**

Some people carry gene variants (SNPs) in the DAO or HNMT genes that reduce their ability to efficiently clear histamine. This doesn't mean you're doomed – it just means your system might be more sensitive to histamine buildup, especially under stress.

9

### **Nervous System Dysregulation**

When your body is stuck in fight-or-flight mode, it becomes more reactive to stimuli, including foods, smells, and even your own stress hormones. This constant signal of threat can push mast cells to release more histamine and lower your threshold for tolerance.

## **REMINDER:**

Histamine overload is rarely caused by just one thing. It's usually a combination of stressors that gradually overwhelm your system and lower your ability to tolerate what used to feel normal. But once you understand what's contributing to that load, it becomes much easier to make targeted, meaningful changes that actually help your body regain balance.



# How Functional Medicine Approaches Histamine Intolerance

Histamine intolerance rarely improves with a quick fix or a one-size-fits-all diet. That's because it's not just about avoiding certain foods; it's about supporting your whole system to regain balance.

Functional medicine takes a comprehensive approach, focusing on the root causes we just covered.

This means working through three core pillars that work together to lower histamine levels, calm your body's response, and build lasting tolerance.

## Food and Nutrition: Resetting Your Body's Response

When histamine symptoms start to show up, it's easy to feel like food is the enemy. But the truth is, your body isn't reacting to food for no reason – it's reacting because it's overwhelmed.

*The goal isn't to eliminate forever. The goal is to reduce the load, calm the chaos, and help your system reset.*

That's where a low-histamine nutrition plan comes in. Starting with a short-term elimination phase can give your body a break from high-histamine foods, such as aged cheese, wine, fermented foods, and leftovers – foods that are often healthy in other contexts but problematic when your histamine bucket is already full.

### Foods to Avoid With Histamine Intolerance:



Fermented foods



Alcohol, especially wine



Most vinegar + vinegar containing foods



Citrus fruits



Aged cheese and meats



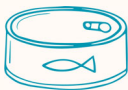
Dried fruits



Cashews, walnuts, and peanuts



Avocado, spinach, mushrooms, and tomatoes



Seafood that is not fresh



Smoked foods



All processed foods



Canned meats

This reset phase is just the beginning. I created the 4-Phase Histamine Reset Plan to help guide this process in a clear, step-by-step way. Instead of guessing, you'll move through a thoughtful progression that includes reducing histamine triggers, restoring nutrient stores, slowly reintroducing foods, and building back resilience in your gut, immune system, and overall tolerance.

The goal is always long-term freedom, not long-term restriction.

I outline this process in detail in my book, [\*The 4-Phase Histamine Reset Plan\*](#), where I also share easy, low-histamine recipes and practical tips that make this approach sustainable and satisfying.

You don't have to eat bland, boring food or feel afraid of every meal. You just need a plan that meets your body where it's at.

### **Lifestyle and Environment: Reducing the Hidden Load**

Food might be the most obvious trigger, but it's rarely the only one. Histamine intolerance is often fueled by what's happening in your day-to-day life – things like chronic stress, poor sleep, toxic exposures, and nervous system overload.

In functional medicine, we view these hidden contributors not just as background noise but as central pieces of the puzzle.

You can be eating the “perfect” low-histamine diet, but if your body is stuck in fight-or-flight mode, your histamine system may still be on high alert.

Let's start with stress. Emotional stress, overwork, trauma, and even under-recovery from illness can all trigger the release of histamine. Your nervous system doesn't separate “emotional threat” from “physical threat”, so that traffic jam, difficult conversation, or skipped lunch can contribute to your symptoms just as much as the avocado you ate.

Sleep is another piece. Poor or inconsistent sleep impacts histamine clearance, raises inflammation, and makes your body more reactive to everything. Prioritizing restorative sleep is one of the most underrated tools you have.

Then there's your environment. Many everyday exposures, like synthetic fragrances, cleaning products, mold, heavy metals, or plastics, can activate mast cells and increase histamine. While you don't need to overhaul your life overnight, starting with simple swaps (like switching to glass instead of plastic containers or filtering your air and water) can help reduce your baseline load.

Movement matters, too. Regular, gentle movement improves lymphatic flow, supports detox, calms the nervous system, and helps regulate inflammation. Think walking, stretching, yoga, or any activity that doesn't spike your stress.

This pillar isn't about perfection. It's about creating a more supportive environment, inside and out, so your body can stop being on the defensive all the time.

### **Targeted Support: Giving Your Body What It Needs to Clear Histamine**

Once you've lowered the incoming histamine from food and reduced some of the hidden stressors in your environment, the next step is to help your body process histamine more effectively.

This is where targeted support, especially the right nutrients and supplements, can make a big difference.

Histamine doesn't just need to be avoided. It needs to be broken down. And for that to happen, your body relies on two main enzymes (DAO and HNMT), plus a steady supply of nutrients to keep them working.

# In functional medicine, we focus on three areas of support:

## **Gentle Liver Support**

Your liver plays a major role in histamine clearance and estrogen metabolism, both of which can influence symptoms. Nutrients like NAC, milk thistle, and glutathione support detox pathways, reduce oxidative stress, and aid methylation, an important process for breaking down histamine in the body. This isn't about aggressive detoxing but giving your liver what it needs to do its job efficiently. better.

## **Mast Cell and Immune Modulation**

When mast cells are overly sensitive, they release histamine too easily. Compounds like quercetin, vitamin C, and nettle leaf help stabilize mast cells and support a more balanced immune response. Perilla seed extract is a natural antihistamine and helps calm allergy-like symptoms. Black seed oil modulates immune response and supports inflammation balance. These nutrients can help your body become less reactive over time.

You can get quercetin not just from supplements but also from foods like apples, red onions, scallions, broccoli, cranberries, olive oil, and dark leafy greens.

## **Nutrient Repletion for Histamine Breakdown**

DAO and HNMT enzymes need certain vitamins and minerals to function. These include magnesium, zinc, vitamin C, and B vitamins (especially B6, B12, and folate in bioavailable forms). A high-quality multivitamin can help fill in gaps while you work on food-based nourishment. A high-quality DAO supplement can also be beneficial for breaking down histamine.

You might also consider adding more blueberries, black plums, cherries, sprouts, and bell peppers to your meals – these are all rich in antioxidants that support histamine metabolism.

These nutrients aren't meant to be a forever fix.

However, in the early stages, they can help reduce your symptom load and assist your system in resetting.

The goal isn't to load up on supplements but to give your body the tools it needs to calm down, clear histamine, and function better.

# What to Do Next

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If you've made it this far, you're already doing the most important thing – you're starting to understand your body instead of blaming it.

Histamine intolerance can feel like a moving target. One day, it's headaches. Next, it's digestive issues, insomnia, or anxiety. But now you know it's not random. There are patterns. There are root causes. And there are ways to bring your system back into balance, step by step.

To help you get started, I've included a quick reference list of high-histamine foods and a printable symptom tracker at the end of this guide. Use these tools to spot patterns, lower your histamine load, and take back some control over how you feel.

## **If you're ready to go deeper:**

### **Join the Histamine Reset Course**

This [self-paced program](#) is designed to walk you through every phase of recovery, from understanding histamine intolerance to restoring your gut and building long-term resilience.

Inside the course, you'll get:

- Training modules that explain what's going on in your body and why symptoms seem so unpredictable
- A clear, step-by-step guide for eliminating high-histamine foods and preparing your body to release stored toxins safely
- A deep dive into uncovering and addressing the root causes of histamine intolerance, including gut infections, nutrient deficiencies, and more
- A full gut repair protocol to help you heal from the most common underlying driver: gut dysfunction
- An 80-recipe low-histamine meal plan designed not just to reduce symptoms but to support true gut repair
- Printable worksheets and a detailed food diary to help you track progress, identify patterns, and personalize your approach

Whether you're just getting started or have been chasing answers for years, this course gives you structure, strategy, and support, so you're not guessing your way through it.

## **Want personalized support?**

If you're still feeling stuck or are ready for a customized plan tailored to your body, history, and health goals, you can [book a consultation](#) with my team.

Together, we'll create a clear path forward, based on your symptoms, your timeline, and what your body actually needs.

# Quick Reference Tools

Managing histamine intolerance starts with understanding how your body reacts. To help you spot patterns and take action, here are two essential tools you can use right away.

## Symptom Tracker

Use this tracker daily to note the symptoms you experience, their intensity, and any possible triggers, such as specific foods, stress, or poor sleep quality. Tracking for 2–4 weeks will give you valuable clues about what’s affecting your histamine levels.

| Date | Symptoms            | Possible Triggers (Food, Stress, Sleep, Environment) | Severity (1-10) |
|------|---------------------|------------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
|      | Headache/Migraine   |                                                      |                 |
|      | Fatigue             |                                                      |                 |
|      | Digestive Issues    |                                                      |                 |
|      | Skin Problems       |                                                      |                 |
|      | Anxiety/Nervousness |                                                      |                 |
|      | Nasal Congestion    |                                                      |                 |
|      | Rapid Heart Rate    |                                                      |                 |
|      | Sleep Disturbances  |                                                      |                 |
|      | Dizziness/Vertigo   |                                                      |                 |
|      | Other (Write in)    |                                                      |                 |

*Tip: The more consistent you are, the clearer the patterns will become.*

## High-Histamine Foods to Avoid (Initial Phase)

Cutting back on high-histamine foods gives your body the break it needs. Focus on eliminating these common culprits during the early phase of your reset:

### Protein

Anything that is in the Yes Protein List that is not fresh and/or leftovers

### Spices

Anise  
Cinnamon  
Cloves  
Curry Powder  
Paprika/Cayenne  
Nutmeg  
Seasoning packets with restrictive ingredients  
Food labeled \*with spices\*

### Vegetables

Eggplant  
Spinach

### Nuts

**(Highest in histamine)**

Cashews  
Walnuts

### Additional Foods

**(Not all high in histamine, but may cause inflammation)**

Alcohol (*especially red wine*)  
Beans  
Chocolate  
Cinnamon  
Dairy  
Fermented Foods  
Gluten  
Grains  
Peanuts  
Soy

### Vinegars

All vinegars (*except gluten-free distilled white vinegar and apple cider vinegar, which are lowest in histamine*)

Vinegar containing products (*e.g. Olives, Mustard, Ketchup, Mayo*)

### Fruits

Avocado  
Citrus  
Dried Fruit (*Apricots, Prunes, Dates, Figs, Raisins*)  
Strawberries  
Tomato  
Banana



#### Tip:

This is a starting point. After your symptoms calm down, you can slowly test foods one by one to find your personal tolerance.

Using these tools together helps you get a clearer picture of your triggers and makes the next steps more effective. Keep this section handy as you move through your healing journey.

# YES FOODS (EAT FREELY)

## Protein

(Must be fresh or frozen)

Beef  
Bison  
Chicken  
Duck  
Elk  
Lamb  
Pasture Raised Eggs  
(Whites cooked)  
Pheasant  
Pork  
Rabbit  
Seafood (Must be very fresh)  
Turkey  
Venison  
Wild Boar

## Fruits

(Must be fresh or frozen)

Apples  
Apricots  
Blackberries  
Blueberries  
Cherries  
Exotic Fruit (Star fruit, quince)  
Grapes  
Melon  
Pears

## Vegetables

Anise/Fennel Root  
Artichoke  
Arugula  
Asparagus  
Beets  
Bell Peppers  
Bok Choy  
Broccoli  
Brussels Sprouts  
Cabbage  
Carrots  
Cauliflower  
Celery  
Collard Greens  
Cucumber  
Garlic  
Green Beans  
Greens (Beet, Mustard, Turnip)  
Jicama  
Kale  
Leeks  
Lettuce (Bibb, Butter, Red)  
Onions/Shallots  
Parsnips  
Rutabaga  
Sweet Potatoes/Yams  
Swiss Chard  
Turnip  
Watercress  
Zucchini

## Flours

Arrowroot  
Cassava  
Tapioca

## Fats

Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
Ghee  
Grass-fed Butter  
Coconut Oil

## Sweeteners

Black Strap Molasses  
Honey (local is best)  
Maple Syrup/ Maple Sugar  
Coconut sugar

## Others

Celtic or Himalayan Sea Salt  
Leafy Herbs  
Pepper  
White Tea and Herbal Teas

# MAYBE FOODS (EAT IN MODERATION)

## Fruits

Raspberries  
Kiwi  
Lemon  
Lime  
Mango  
Nectarine  
Papaya  
Peach  
Plum  
Pineapple

## Vegetables

Mushrooms  
Peas  
Pumpkin  
Squash

## Nuts

Soaked Almonds,  
Pecans, Pistachios  
Soaked Brazil and  
Pine Nuts

## Other

Apple Cider Vinegar  
Coconut Products  
(Coconut milk,  
Coconut butter,  
Shredded Coconut)  
Dried Herbs/Spices  
Gelatin/Collagen  
Gluten-Free Distilled  
White Vinegar  
Yeast

## Seed and Seed Butters

Flax, Sesame,  
Sunflower  
Pumpkin

## Flours

(Most people do ok with these, but check your tolerance)

Almond Flour