

Urogynaecology department

Histamine intolerance and its role in chronic bladder inflammation

Information for patients, relatives and carers

Introduction

This leaflet explains what histamine intolerance is and how you can treat it. Please ask our team any questions you have about the information below.

What is histamine?

Histamine is produced by cells in the body when it is experiencing an allergic reaction. It can also be released during an infection. Histamines are produced by mast cells and contribute to the inflammatory response in our body. Histamine is also contained in some of the foods we eat.

How does histamine affect my bladder?

Histamine causes inflammation. In most people histamine is quickly broken down by our bodies and does not cause any lasting symptoms. In people with histamine intolerance, histamine can build up and cause similar symptoms to allergies such as rashes, itching, headaches, diarrhoea and vomiting or abdominal pain. It is important to know that this indicates intolerance, not an allergy.

In the bladder it can cause symptoms such as:

- a burning sensation or pain similar to a urinary tract infection
- problems with persistent or recurrent urinary tract infections

What tests diagnose histamine intolerance?

There are no definitive blood tests to diagnose this condition. In most cases it is suspected from your symptoms and if you respond well to the medications prescribed.

What treatments can be used?

Antihistamines: are medications which block the histamine receptors in our body and can be used to lessen the effects of histamine. There are different types of histamine receptors and a combination of antihistamines may be used.

Cimetidine/Ranitidine: this is another type of antihistamine that blocks different histamine receptors in the body to other antihistamines. It is often used in combination with regular antihistamines.

Antibiotics: bacterial overgrowth can cause a rise in histamine. Therefore, it is important we treat any suspected urinary tract infection. The inflammation caused by histamine can also disrupt the lining of the bladder, allowing bacteria to spread deep into the bladder, requiring long courses of antibiotics.

Diet: one of the best treatments is to reduce the amount of histamine in your diet, so your body has less extra histamine to deal with. Certain foods are particularly high in histamine and you may have already noticed that these foods worsen your bladder symptoms. We recommend that patients try a low histamine diet - please see the table below. Try to avoid cultured, processed, cured, fermented and aged foods. Choose fresh foods whenever possible. The amount of histamine-rich foods tolerated will vary from person to person.

Key: Expected symptoms in patients with histamine intolerance

- 0= No symptoms after eating usual quantity
- 1= Occasionally eating small amounts ok
- 2= Distinct symptoms after eating usual quantity
- 3= Intense symptoms

Animal Foods	Meat/Fish	Vegetables	Fruits
2= Egg white	0= Beef (fresh)	0= Potatoes	0= Apple
0= Egg yolk	0= Minced meat	0= Oats	0= Apricot
0= Butter	(eaten immediately	0= Rice	2= Bananas
0= Cream cheese	after production)	0= Sweetcorn	0= Berries
3= Hard cheeses	3= Dried/smoked meat	0= Asparagus	1= Cocoa butter
1= Natural yoghurt	3= Ham (dried/cured)	2= Aubergine	2= Cocoa powder/
	1= Pork (fresh)	2= Avocado	chocolate
Spices and	3= Tuna	2= Beans	0= Coconut
seasonings	0= Freshly caught fish	0= Broccoli	1= Figs
2= Bouillon	3= Fish (in shop, on	0= Cabbage	0= Grapes
2= Curry	ice)	0= Carrot	2= Guava
1= Ginger	2= Seafood	0= Cauliflower	2= Kiwi
2= Mustard		0= Celery	3= Lime
1= Nutmeg	Beverages	2= Chickpeas	1= Mango
2= Paprika hot	0= Mineral water	2= Chilli pepper	2= Papaya
2= Pepper	0= Tap water	0= Cucumber	0= Peach
3= Vinegar (red/white	2= Beer	1= Garlic	1= Pear
wine)	2= Brandy	1= Onion	2= Pineapple
1= Vinegar (apple)	3= Champagne	2= Olives	1= Plum
3= Soy sauce	2= Rum	2= Rocket	2= Raspberry
Sweeteners	3= Wine	2= Soy beans	1= Rhubarb
1= Artificial sweeteners	1= Wine (histamine-	2= Spinach	2= Strawberry
2= Licorice root	free wine)	0= Radish	0= Watermelon
2= Malt extract	1= Green tea	2= Tomatoes	0= Redcurrants
0= Sugar	0= Peppermint tea	2= Mushrooms	3= Orange
0= Maple syrup	0= Rooibos tea	2= Lentils	2= Lemon
0= Honey	1= Coffee	3= Pickled cabbage	2= Grapefruit
	1= Cola/soft drinks		
	0= Elderflower		

Where can I get more information?

www.allergyuk.org > common food intolerances > histamine intolerance

Contact details

The urogynaecology nurses can be contacted on 020 3312 1752 between 09.00 and 17.00, Monday to Friday. Please leave a message with the administrator.

How do I make a comment about my visit?

We aim to provide the best possible service and staff will be happy to answer any of the questions you may have. If you have any **suggestions** or **comments** about your visit, please either speak to a member of staff or contact the patient advice and liaison service (**PALS**) on **020 3313 0088** (Charing Cross, Hammersmith and Queen Charlotte's & Chelsea hospitals), or **020 3312 7777** (St Mary's and Western Eye hospitals). You can also email PALS at pals@imperial.nhs.uk. The PALS team will listen to your concerns, suggestions or queries and is often able to help solve problems on your behalf.

Alternatively, you may wish to express your concerns in **writing** to:

Chief executive - complaints
Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust
Trust Headquarters
The Bays, South Wharf Road
London W2 1NY

Alternative formats

This leaflet can be provided on request in large print, as a sound recording, in Braille, or in alternative languages. Please contact the communications team on **020 3312 5592**.

We have a free and premium wi-fi service at each of our five hospitals. For further information please visit our website: www.imperial.nhs.uk

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