

# Diet for the Headache Patient

## National Headache Foundation

Formerly National Migraine Foundation  
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These suggestions for diet changes to help with chronic headaches come from a handout by the National Headache Foundation.

## Introduction

Tyramine content may vary among brand names available in the market because of preparation, processing or storage. It is best to eat only freshly prepared foods to avoid the risk of eating foods that may have been aged, fermented, pickled or marinated. Tenderizers, monosodium glutamate, nitrate or nitrite compounds are likely to be provoking agents. It is important to read labels carefully when shopping and ask questions when eating out.

| <b>Food Group</b>                | <b>Foods Allowed</b>  | <b>Foods to Avoid</b>  |
|----------------------------------|---|--|
| <b>Beverages</b>                 | Decaffeinated coffee, colas without caffeine. Limit your caffeine sources to only two cups daily of coffee, tea or colas. | Alcoholic beverages, wines, ale and beer.  |
| <b>Milk</b>                      | Homogenized, skim and 2%  | Chocolate and buttermilk   |
| <b>Dairy Products</b>            | Cottage cheese, cream cheese, American cheese, Velveeta or synthetic cheese. Yogurt in 1/2 cup portions or less.          | Aged and processed cheese including: Cheddar, Swiss, Mozzarella, Parmesan, Roman, Brick, Brie, Camembert, Gouda, Gruyere, Emmentaler, Stilton, provolone, Roquefort, Blue and cheese-containing foods (such as pizza and Macaroni and cheese), sour cream.   |
| <b>Meat and Meat Substitutes</b> | Fresh prepared meats and eggs   | Aged, canned, cured or processed meats, those containing nitrates or nitrites, commercial meat extracts, pickled or dried herring, chicken livers, sausage, salami, pepperoni, bologna, frankfurters, pates, peanuts and peanut butter, marinated meats: any prepared with tenderizers, soy sauce or yeast extracts. |

# Diet for the Headache Patient

| <b>Food Group</b>                  | <b>Foods Allowed</b>   | <b>Foods to Avoid</b>   |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>Bread and Bread Substitutes</b> | All except those on the avoid list.  | Homemade yeast breads, fresh coffee cake, doughnuts, yeast and yeast extracts, sourdough breads, breads and crackers containing cheese, any containing chocolate or nuts.   |
| <b>Fruits</b>                      | All except those on the avoid list.<br>Limit the following citrus fruits to 1/2 cup serving per day: oranges, grapefruit, pineapple, lemon and lime. | Canned figs, raisins, papaya, passion fruit, avocado, red plums, 1/2 banana allowed per day.  |
| <b>Vegetables</b>                  | All except those on the avoid list.  | Italian broad beans, Fava beans, lima, navy and pea pods, sauerkraut, onions except for flavoring.  |
| <b>Desserts</b>                    | All except fresh yeast-raised desserts or those containing chocolate.  | Any with chocolate.   |
| <b>Miscellaneous</b>               | White vinegar, commercial salad dressing in small amounts.   | Brewer's yeast, chocolates, soy sauce, monosodium glutamate, meat tenderizers, papaya products, Accent, Lawry's and other seasoning salts, soup cubes canned soups, frozen TV dinners. Some snack items containing items to be avoided. <b>Read all labels.</b> |

Avoid all alcoholic beverages if possible. If you must drink, no more than two normal size drinks.

Suggested drinks include haute sauterne, Riesling wine, Seagram's VO, Cutty Sark and Vodka.