Controlling the Tyramine in Your Diet

What is tyramine?
Tyramine is a chemical found in all foods. It is normally harmless. But for people who take certain medicines, tyramine can cause severe problems.

Why do I need to control it?
Your doctor has placed you on a kind of medicine called an MAOI (monoamine oxidase inhibitor). If you eat too much tyramine while taking this drug, it may cause serious symptoms. These include:

- High blood pressure
- Severe headache
- Large pupils
- Stiff neck
- Sweating
- Nausea (feeling sick to your stomach) or vomiting (throwing up)
- Heartbeat that is too fast, too slow or not normal
- Chest pain

These symptoms may be harmful and could result in death. If you have any of these symptoms, call your doctor right away.

How do I control it?
1. Avoid high-tyramine foods. Any food that is aged, cured, fermented, over-ripe or spoiled could contain large amounts of tyramine.
2. Limit medium-tyramine foods. Eat no more than ¼ to ½ cup of these foods each day.

For a list of foods to avoid or limit, see the back of this page.

What if I stop taking my MAOI?
Your doctor may want you to go off your medicine at some point. If so, you will need to avoid high-tyramine foods for 3 to 4 weeks after you stop taking your MAOI.
Avoid these foods

**Milk products**
- Aged cheese (like blue, camembert, cheddar, gorgonzola, gouda, gruyere, provolone, Roquefort, Stilton, Swiss)

Note: It’s okay to eat yogurt, sour cream, cream cheese, farmer’s cheese, cottage cheese, mozzarella, processed cheese slices and ricotta cheese.

**Fruits and vegetables**
- Fava beans or broad beans
- Fermented cabbage (like sauerkraut and kim chee)
- Soy beans, edamame
- Over-ripened fruit (like bananas or avocados)
- Dried fruit

**Meats and fish**
- Aged, dried or cured meats (including meat jerky, dry sausage and salami)
- Salted, smoked or pickled meat or fish
- Leftovers that are more than 24 hours old
- Poorly stored liver or caviar (it has changed color, looks moldy or has a strange smell)
- Meat extract

**Alcohol**
- Tap beer, imported beer (including non-alcoholic beer), homemade or unpasteurized beer and wine

**Other foods**
- Hydrolyzed protein or yeast extracts, found in:
  - Brewer’s yeast
  - Marmite and Vegemite
  - Store-bought gravy
  - Broth and bouillon
- Miso (fermented soybean paste)
- Soy sauce
- Most tofu (fresh tofu is okay)
- Protein powder supplements
- Sourdough breads
- Tempeh

Limit these foods (eat no more than ¼ to ½ cup each day)

**Milk products**
- Unpasteurized milk products

**Meats and fish**
- Meat pâtés
- Pepperoni, hot dogs, bologna

**Alcohol**
- Domestic beer (including non-alcoholic beer)
- More than two bottles or cans of beer within eight hours (including non-alcoholic beer)
- More than 4 ounces of wine within eight hours

**Other foods**
- Teriyaki sauce (have no more than 2 to 4 tablespoons per day)
- Chocolate (2 ounces) or chocolate containing dessert (4 ounces)
- Peanut butter (2 to 4 ounces) or peanuts