

MIGRAINE FOOD TRIGGERS

There are a huge number of foods that can trigger migraines in some people. While some are easy to identify, others require that you read the ingredient labels.

With most migraines sufferers for whom food is an issue, several (or even most) of the items on the list may serve as triggers. The list includes:

AGED CHEESE: This means that while cheddar, provolone, parmesan, mozzarella and similar cheeses may be a problem, there are other cheeses that do not impact migraine sufferers this way. For example, common processed American cheese is not associated with migraines. Neither is Velveeta, cream cheese, cottage cheese or ricotta. Particular enzymes created by the aging process are thought to be the trigger. Cultured dairy products, like sour cream, buttermilk, and yogurt can also be included in this category.

ALCOHOL: While too much alcohol can make your head hurt for reasons that have little to do with migraines, some alcoholic beverages trigger migraines because of the tannins that are found in the drink. Tannins are compounds found in many plants. They account for much of the unique flavor differences from one wine to the next. The darker a wine or liquor is, the more tannin it has. The more tannin it has, the more likely to be a migraine trigger.

CAFFEINE: While small doses of caffeine are sometimes used to treat migraines, excessive amounts may trigger them.

CHOCOLATE: Phenylethylamine is a chemical found in chocolate that is thought to be the trigger for migraines in people who are sensitive to chocolate. Chocolate also contains caffeine.

GLUTAMATES: A glutamate is a common amino acid that can occur naturally. There are several different glutamates and they have become common in food. The worst offender is monosodium glutamate, or MSG. MSG is found in lots of different food, including snack foods like potato chips, frozen dinners, and some ethnic foods like

Chinese food. There are other glutamates. They include the artificial sweetener Aspartame, yeast extract, and hydrolyzed soy or corn protein.

NITRATES & NITRITES: These are commonly used as preservatives in processed meats. Bacon and ham almost always have sodium nitrite. Canned meat & lunch meat are also sources.

TYRAMINE: This is a substance created by the process of aging food. It is not usually on the list of ingredients, but it is found in many aged meats and cheeses. Some common examples include pepperoni, salami, and liverwurst.

NUTS: Almost any nut can be a migraine trigger. But just because peanuts trigger a migraine in you, that doesn't mean that almonds do too.

SOME FRUITS: Ripe bananas, citrus fruits, kiwi, papaya, some plums, raspberries, and pineapples have all been associated with migraines in some people.

TOBACCO: Nicotine does affect blood vessels in the brain and triggers migraines in some people. Most tobacco products also contain nitrates and nitrites.