



Important Drug and Food Information

From the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Drug-Nutrient Interaction Task Force

Important information to know when you take any of the following drugs:

Monoamine Oxidase Inhibitor (MAOI) Medications:

- ▶ Phenezine (Nardil)
- ▶ Tranylcypromine (Parnate)
- ▶ Isocarboxazid (Marplan)
- ▶ Selegiline (Eldepryl) only in doses above 10 mg/day

There can be a dangerous interaction between your medicine and tyramine, a substance found in some foods and beverages. For this reason, you must follow these dietary instructions from the day you start taking an MAOI medicine until 3 to 4 weeks after you stop taking it.

Tyramine is found in foods that are fermented, aged, or spoiled. Normally, an enzyme (called monoamine oxidase) in your digestive tract keeps tyramine levels within a safe range. But when you take an MAOI this enzyme can no longer work on tyramine. When tyramine levels increase, they can cause potentially serious reactions such as severe hypertension (high blood pressure), headaches, heart problems, nausea, vomiting, visual disturbances, and confusion. For this reason, you will need to avoid eating foods containing significant amounts of tyramine.

Do not eat or drink any of the following:

- ▶ All aged and mature cheeses. The only cheeses that are okay to eat are: cottage cheese, cream cheese, ricotta, part-skim mozzarella and processed cheeses like American, if eaten before the expiration or “best if used by” date. It is best to eat these cheeses soon after opening to make sure that products are eaten when freshest.
- ▶ All improperly stored meats, fish, and poultry. See details under Guidelines section.
- ▶ Air-dried sausages such as pepperoni, summer “dry” sausage, salami, pastrami, and mortadella.
- ▶ Alcoholic beverages. In particular, unpasteurized beers, including beers from micro-breweries or on tap, are known to contain tyramine.
- ▶ Sauerkraut

- ▶ Fermented soy products including soy sauce, teriyaki, soybean paste, fermented bean curd (fermented tofu), miso soup, tamari, natto, shoyu, and tempeh.

The following foods are rarely eaten in the U.S., so you may not be familiar with them.

- ▶ **Avoid: Fava or broad bean pods, banana peel and yeast spread such as Marmite or Vegemite.**

Guidelines

- ▶ **All foods that you eat must be very fresh, or properly frozen.** Store all fresh packaged meat, fish, poultry, and dairy products in the refrigerator/freezer immediately. Eat allowed refrigerated meat products within 3 to 4 days. Eat allowed refrigerated cheeses before the expiration or “best if used by” date. Avoid foods if you are unsure of their storage conditions.
- ▶ **Remember to stay away from combination foods that contain foods to be avoided** such as cheese crackers, sub sandwiches, stir-fried dishes containing soy sauce, etc. Pizza, lasagna, and other cheese-containing dishes may be eaten only if made with “allowed” cheeses and toppings.
- ▶ **There are many medicines and dietary supplements you must avoid.** Tell your doctor, dentist, or pharmacist that you are taking an MAOI medication before taking any dietary supplements or medicines (either over-the-counter or prescription). There is a risk of interaction with MAOIs and many diet or weight-reducing drugs; sinus, hay fever, or cold medicines; nose sprays or drops; asthma inhalants or tablets; cough medicines; and herbal products such as St. John’s wort and Ginseng.

If you have any questions about these instructions, ask your pharmacist, dietitian, or nurse.

This information is prepared specifically for persons taking part in clinical research at the National Institutes of Health Clinical Center and may not apply to patients elsewhere. If you have questions about the information presented here, talk to a member of your health care team.

Products/resources named serve as examples and do not imply endorsement by NIH. The fact that a certain product/resource is not named does not imply that such product/resource is unsatisfactory.

National Institutes of Health Clinical Center
Bethesda, MD 20892

Questions about the Clinical Center?
<http://www.cc.nih.gov/comments.shtml>
11/2011

