

***** means means it adds a lot of congestion**

**** means it adds medium congestion**

*** means it adds a little congestion**

“Congestion” means that an immune response has been triggered in your body, the result of which, for me, is congestion (mucus) in ears/nose/throat and also ‘brain fog’.

Congesting foods:

Dairy***

- Butter and heavy dairy like you find in most yogurts or ice cream are the worst. Hard cheeses are very minor (one star), like pizza doesn't congest me much usually.

Processed sugars**

- Are any sugars okay? I THINK (not positive) that any/most sugar that don't go through any processing (for example a pure maple syrup or honey) wouldn't congest me. But requires further testing. I once had macaroons that used "invert sugar", which apparently is a sugar that goes through minimal, or a certain type of, processing. And that didn't seem to congest me. Actually it's the only sweet cookie I can think of that hasn't congested me (as far as I could tell. Usually I can because the congestion occurs within 60 seconds of eating the offending food). I found a link to this macaroon so the ingredients can be examined:

<https://www.amazon.com/Absolutely-Classic-Toasted-Macaroons-Passover/dp/B06XGHQWKC>.

Notice that in general it has very minimal ingredients (which is generally a good sign for me!). Natural fruit sugars don't seem to congest me. Some fruits do, unexpectedly, like blueberries. My research leads me to believe this is because they may have small black mold particles on them from the way they are grown. For most people this tiny amount of *Aspergillus Niger* (black mold) would not trigger an immune response (congestion) but for me it does.

Citric acid**

- Includes citrus fruits, and more importantly the citric acid that gets artificially created/added to foods (common preservative). Citric acid found naturally in citrus fruit (like apples, oranges) seems to be less congesting than the additive (one star).

Soy**

- The soy protein, also found in the additive soy lecithin which is in a lot of foods

Processed salt**

- Sea salt with no extra ingredients is not processed and doesn't congest me

Assorted preservatives*

- Probably because they go through a certain kind of processing? There are probably some preservatives that do not go through those same processes but I'm not sure which ones, if any, do not trigger my immune response. Ones I'm pretty sure ARE problematic include 'sorbates',

like sodium sorbate, benzoic acid/benzoates. But I'm not certain (since I haven't isolated the ingredients).

...Basically anything processed?*

- Processed additives (like 'locust bean gum') is in a lot of 'health foods' but it's still a processed additive that seems to give me minor congestion. Processed grains too (I eat steel cut oats because they aren't processed and they seem to be all good for me), etc. To find out if something is processed I just try googling. Sometimes it's hard to find out. Most likely certain kinds of processing are fine, but I don't know how to determine that. And again it's hard to be certain about these in general since I haven't isolated the ingredients.

(Some?) High histamine foods/histamine releasers*

- Like avocado, alcohol, cocoa, dried fruit (the latter being two to three stars, I think cause of preservatives that get added to dried fruits?)

Unsure/requires isolated testing: caffeine, spicy spices, cinnamon