

Scombroid Case Definition

Background

Symptoms of scombroid poisoning include tingling or burning in or around the mouth or throat, rash, hives, itching of the skin, drop in blood pressure, headache, dizziness, nausea, vomiting, diarrhea, asthmatic-like constriction of air passages, heart palpitations, and respiratory distress. Symptoms can occur within a few minutes to a few hours of consumption and last from 12 hours to a few days and occur after consumption of fish known to produce histamine.

Clinical criteria for case classification

Severity of scombroid poisoning can vary, but it should resemble an allergic reaction. One or more of the following symptoms:

- Tingling or burning in or around mouth or throat,
- Or Rash,
- Or Hives,
- Or Itching,
- Or Drop in blood pressure,
- Or Headache,
- Or Dizziness,
- Or Nausea,
- Or Vomiting,
- Or Diarrhea,
- Or Asthmatic-like constriction of air passages,
- Or Heart palpitations,
- Or Respiratory distress.

Laboratory criteria for case classification

If food is tested, must have a histamine level above FDA limit (50 ppm) in order to be a confirmed case.

Epidemiological criteria for case classification

A person with a history of consuming fish commonly associated with scombroid (see Table 1) in the 6 hours before onset of symptoms.

Case classification

Confirmed:

A clinically compatible illness in a person with epidemiologic criteria.

Probable:

A clinically compatible illness in a person diagnosed with scombroid by a healthcare provider, but with reported exposure to a fish not typically associated with scombroid (see Table 1). Rarely, scombroid has been associated with certain cheeses or fermented foods; a patient with compatible illness but no fish exposures can be asked about these foods but is unlikely to actually have scombroid.

Criteria to distinguish a new case from previous reports

Not applicable

Table 1: Fish commonly associated with Scombroid

Tuna	Bonito	Bluefish
Swordfish	Saury	Anchovies
Marlin	Mahi Mahi	Sardine
Mackerel	Yellowtail Amberjack	