

# Heart Healthy Eating: Triglycerides

## Why This Diet is Important

Triglycerides are a type of fat found in your blood that are affected by what you eat and drink. If you have high triglyceride levels you may be at a greater risk of developing heart disease. You can lower your triglycerides by making changes in what you eat and by exercising regularly.

## Some Causes of High Triglycerides

- Being overweight (especially excess fat around the waist area)
- Drinking too much alcohol
- Uncontrolled diabetes or having high blood sugars
- Eating a diet high in sugar or sweet foods
- Eating a diet high in fat and calories



## Steps You Can Take

- Choose foods that are lower in saturated and trans fat.
- Increase your physical activity.
- Eat less sugar and sweets.
- Decrease your alcohol intake.
- Increase your intake of omega-3 fat from fish sources.
- If you have diabetes, good control of blood sugars may also help lower triglycerides.
- Lose weight if needed. Waist measurements should be less than 40 inches for men and 35 inches for women. Waist measurements may be lower for some ethnic groups; check with your dietitian.
- Eat balanced meals at regular times every four to six hours.

This information is not meant to replace advice from your medical doctor or individual counseling with a registered dietitian. It is intended for educational and informational purposes only.

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## Food Choices for Managing Your Triglycerides

- Choose small portions of lean, well-trimmed cuts of meat. A small portion is about the size of a deck of cards (2 ½ oz or 75 grams).
- Choose fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, Atlantic herring, sardines or trout at least twice a week. Fish oil supplements may be used as directed by your health professional. See a dietitian for guidance.
- Use low-fat dairy products such as 1% or skim milk and cheeses with 15 – 20% milk fat or less.
- Use unsaturated oils such as canola, olive, peanut, safflower, soybean, sunflower or corn.
- Choose non-hydrogenated, soft tub margarine made from unsaturated oils.
- Use less margarine, mayonnaise and gravy on bread, meat, potatoes and other vegetables.
- Compare food labels to find out which products are lower in saturated and trans fat and sugar.
- Bake, poach, roast, broil, grill and barbeque food more often.
- Drink water instead of sweet drinks when you are thirsty.
- Eat whole fruit instead of juice whenever possible. Fruit is a good source of fibre and one piece of fruit is lower in natural sugar than one cup of juice.
- Reduce the amount of sugar used in baked goods by at least ¼ or replace some of the sugar with artificial sweetener.
- Look for syrups, jellies and jams with less sugar.
- Reduce alcohol intake to no more than 1 to 2 drinks per day or don't drink at all. Even one drink can increase triglycerides in some people.

**Distributed by:**

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