

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 glucose (sugar)
- Eating a diet high in sugar or sweet foods
- Eating a diet high in fat and calories

Step 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 glucose may also help lower triglycerides

- Lose weight if needed. Waist measurements should be less than 102 cm (40 inches) for men and 88 cm (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

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 (75 grams or 2 ½ oz).
- 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.

Trusted advice from dietitians. www.dietitians.ca

- 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 $\frac{1}{4}$ 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.

Trusted advice from dietitians. www.dietitians.ca