

# Tips to Lower Triglycerides



THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY  
WEXNER MEDICAL CENTER

Triglycerides are a type of fat made in the liver that circulates in the blood with other fats, such as cholesterol. High triglycerides may cause hardening of the arteries, also called atherosclerosis. High triglycerides are a risk factor for heart disease, diabetes, and fatty liver disease.

A triglyceride level below 150 mg is best. Your doctor may recommend a level below 100 mg for improved health and heart protection.

## Tips to lower your triglyceride level

- **Lose weight if you are overweight.** Start with a weight loss goal of 5 to 10%. This may reduce triglycerides by as much as 20%. Lose weight with regular exercise and by reducing the total amount of calories you eat.
- **Be active.** Get at least 150 minutes of exercise each week. Walking, swimming, biking, and running are good choices. Begin slowly and increase the time you exercise and the intensity of the exercise over time.
- **Stop smoking.**
- **Reduce alcohol use.**
- **Eat a diet rich in fruits, vegetables, whole grains, low fat dairy products, and lean meats.**
- **Reduce added sugars in your diet, especially sugary drinks.**
  - Choose water first for thirst. Unsweetened tea, black coffee, and other calorie-free drinks are also good options.
  - Reduce other simple sugars in your diet, such as sweets, baked goods, sweetened yogurts, granola bars, and other products made with refined grains, like white flour.
- **Reduce saturated fats and trans fats in your diet.** Most saturated fats and trans fats come from animal sources, such as fatty meats, cheese, cream, butter, and other whole milk dairy products. They are also found in baked goods and fried foods. Replace these foods with foods high in monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats, like fish, nuts, beans, and legumes. Be careful to not replace saturated fats and trans fats in your diet with simple sugars as this can raise triglycerides.
  - For a 2,000 calorie diet, keep saturated fats to less than 13 grams per day.
  - Look for “0 g trans fat” on food labels. Avoid foods that list “partially hydrogenated oil” on the ingredient list.

- **Choose healthier vegetable oils**, like olive, canola, safflower, or sunflower oils.
- **Eat fish and other sources of omega-3 fatty acids.**
  - Salmon, mackerel, herring, and albacore tuna - eat 2 to 3 ounces, 3 to 5 times a week
  - Chia seeds and ground flaxseeds - add to food
  - Walnuts - eat 1 ounce (about 7 nuts) each day

If lifestyle changes aren't enough to lower your triglycerides, your doctor may recommend medicines.

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**Talk to your doctor or health care team if you have any questions about your care.**

For more health information, contact the Library for Health Information at **614-293-3707** or e-mail **health-info@osu.edu**.