

Dietary Guidelines for Reducing Triglycerides

Triglycerides are fats found in the blood and fat cells. A high triglyceride level in the blood may increase your risk of heart disease and may harm your pancreas.

- What can cause high triglycerides?
- Foods that Raise Triglyceride Levels
- Best Food Choices
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What can cause high triglycerides?

Lifestyle factors: Lack of exercise, being overweight, smoking, skipping meals and eating large portions of foods at one time.

Dietary factors: Excessive intake of alcohol, saturated and trans fat, sugar, starch and calories.

Medical history: Poorly controlled diabetes, insulin resistance (a precursor to diabetes), polycystic ovary syndrome (PCOS), kidney disease, some medications and family history.

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Foods that Raise Triglyceride Levels

The following foods and beverages contain nutrients that raise triglyceride levels and should be limited.

Alcohol: Beer, wine, hard liquor and liqueurs.

Saturated fats: Fats solid at room temperature, including animal fats, lard, butter and shortening. Also, fried foods, whole milk, whole milk dairy products, cheese, cream cheese, high-fat meats and fast foods.

Trans fats: Hydrogenated fats found in margarine, vegetable shortening, fried foods, fast foods and most commercial snack foods such as pastries, cakes, pies, crackers, etc.

Sugar: Concentrated sweets such as sugar, honey, molasses, jams, jellies and candy. Desserts such as pies, cakes, cookies, candy, doughnuts, ice cream, frozen yogurt and sweetened gelatin.

Beverages: Fruit juices, fruit drinks, fruit punches, regular sodas, smoothies, sports drinks and sweetened coffee drinks.

Other foods: Sweetened cereals, flavored yogurts and sports or energy bars

Starch: Concentrated starchy foods -- Bagels, pasta, rice, potatoes, large rolls, pizza, pretzels, popcorn, chips, many fat-free foods and ready-to-eat cereals. Choose **small portions** of these due to their **high carbohydrate density**. Use whole grains and legumes (starchy beans) in preference to

Best Food Choices

Fruit: Choose fresh fruits in season for best flavor and nutrition. Avoid fruit juices even fresh squeezed, because of their high sugar content. Unsweetened frozen fruit and canned fruit that is rinsed in water may also be included.

Vegetables: Eat at least 3 or more cups a day of fresh or frozen prepared vegetables. Be liberal and creative with vegetable preparation and intake.

Breads and cereals: Choose whole grain breads, crackers, unsweetened high-fiber cereals or old fashioned oatmeal. Try other grains such as amaranth, millet, quinoa, barley, buckwheat or bulgur.

Protein: Select lean meats, poultry without skin, egg, egg substitute or egg white, cooked dried beans, lentils, peas, nuts and low-fat soy products. Eat fish at least twice a week. Include fatty fish such as salmon, mackerel, blue fin tuna, sardines and anchovies.

Dairy: Use fat-free or 1% milk, fat-free or lowfat plain yogurt, light fruit yogurt and low-fat or soy cheeses.

Fat: Include 1 tablespoon of canola, olive or peanut oil per day. Include 1/4 cup of nuts per day (almonds, walnuts, peanuts, mixed nuts) or 1/2 avocado. Avocados, olives and natural nut butters are excellent fats to include.

Sugar-free products: Diet sodas and other diet beverages, gelatin and pudding.

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Additional Tips

- Eat 3-6 small meals per day, rather than large meals. Each should consist of at least 2 food groups.
- Exercise regularly (especially aerobic activity such as cycling, jogging, swimming or walking for a minimum of 30 minutes, 5 days per week, or 10,000 steps using a pedometer.
- Lose weight if you are overweight -- 10 to 20 pounds can make a big difference. Combine smaller food portions with exercise.
- Eat more fiber-rich foods such as vegetables, whole grains, legumes and fruit.
- Avoid deep-fried foods.
- Control blood glucose (sugar) levels if you have diabetes.
- Quit smoking.