

# Care Gram

## Triglycerides

### What Are Triglycerides?

Triglycerides are a type of fat found in our blood. Normal levels for triglycerides are 150 mg/dL or less after a 12 hour fast. Having high amounts of triglycerides in the blood is known as hypertriglyceridemia. High triglycerides can occur with or without high cholesterol. Triglycerides greater than 200 mg/dL increases your risk for heart disease and Metabolic Syndrome. Triglycerides greater than 500 mg/dL increases your risk for pancreatitis.

You are more likely to have a high triglyceride level if you:

- Have others in your family with high triglycerides
- Eat too many calories
- Are overweight or obese with a BMI (Body Mass Index) of 25 or higher
- Eat too much carbohydrate or fat
- Have prolonged high blood sugar levels
- Drink too much alcohol

### How Can I Lower My Triglyceride Level?

#### Choose Healthy Fats

- Limit saturated fat to less than 7 percent of your total calories per day. For example, if you are using a 2,000-calorie meal plan, limit saturated fat to 15 grams or less per day.
  - Saturated fat is found in animal products, such as meat, butter, some types of milk, sour cream, coconut oil, palm oil, and fully hydrogenated fats.
  - Choose lean cuts of meat and low-fat dairy products made with 1 percent or skim milk.
  - Limit products made from animal fat, such as butter and sour cream.
- Choose unsaturated fats
  - These fats are liquid oils commonly found in plant-based oils and in fish.
  - Examples include peanut oil, soybean oil, canola oil, olive oil, flax seed, and avocado.
  - Choose fish high in omega-3 fatty acids, such as salmon or mackerel, instead of high-fat meats twice a week.
- Eat less than 200 mg of cholesterol per day

#### Eat Moderate Amounts of Carbohydrates

- Choose complex and high fiber containing carbohydrates
  - Eat whole wheat bread and pasta, oats, and high-fiber cereals with at least 3 grams of fiber or more per serving.
  - Use intact grains, such as brown rice, farro, teff, bulger, or quinoa, as sides.
  - Eat a variety of beans, legumes, vegetables, and whole pieces of fruit.
- Limit refined grains made with bleached, enriched, and refined flours that contain little fiber.



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- Limit foods and beverages high in added sugars (sugar added during manufacturing, processing, or at the time of eating).
  - Limit total added sugar to less than 25 grams a day for women and children, and less than 35 grams a day for men.
- Avoid sugary drinks, such as soda pop, Kool-Aid®, High-C, energy drinks, sweet tea, flavored coffee, lattes, mochas, cocoas, lemonade, and large amounts of fruit juice.
- Limit desserts, such as candy, chocolates, pies, cookies, cakes, pastries, doughnuts, muffins, ice cream, and flavored ice.

#### Limit or Avoid Alcohol

- Even small amounts of alcohol can raise triglycerides.

#### Lose Weight (if you are overweight)

- If you are overweight, losing 7 to 10 percent of your body weight can improve triglycerides.
- Eat smaller portions and control the total amount of calories you consume.
- Use a smaller plate, and make 1/2 the plate non-starchy vegetable, 1/4 of the plate carbohydrates, and 1/4 lean protein (about the size of a deck of cards).

#### Other Ways to Lower Triglycerides

- Exercise at least 30 minutes, 5 days a week.
- If you are a smoker or use chewing tobacco, stop.
- Take medication as ordered by your doctor.