

# Triglycerides

## Information for patients and families

### What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides are a type of fat in the body that is measured using a fasting blood test. High triglycerides can put you at risk for developing heart disease and pancreatitis.

### What causes high triglycerides?

- Being overweight (especially around the waist area)
- Poorly controlled diabetes or having high blood sugar
- Genetics
- Eating too much carbohydrate
- Drinking too much alcohol

### What can help lower triglycerides?

1. Achieve or maintain a healthy body weight
  - Lose 5 to 10% of body weight, if needed
  - Exercise regularly - Aim for 60 minutes of daily physical activity
2. Reduce the amount of saturated and trans fat in your diet
  - Eat smaller portions of animal protein (beef, chicken, pork, etc.)
  - Replace animal protein with fish 2 to 3 times per week (see list on the next page)
  - Replace animal protein with lentils, chickpeas and beans 3 meals per week
3. Eat less sugar and sweets, such as juice, pop, cakes, cookies, etc.
4. Reduce your portions of starchy foods and choose whole grains more often.

5. Reduce your alcohol intake
  - Limit your alcohol to 1 to 2 drinks per day, or do not drink at all
6. If you have diabetes, control your blood sugar before a meal (target 4 to 7 mmol/L) and at 2 hours after eating (target 5 to 10 mmol/L)
7. Eat 30 to 60 grams of nuts per day (approximately ¼ to ⅓ cup of nuts)

## Omega-3 fatty acids can help lower your triglycerides

Omega 3 fatty acids are good fats. They are found in some fatty fish, in plant-based foods and fish oil supplements. **Always ask your doctor before taking a fish oil supplement as it may interfere with some medications.**

## Sources of omega-3 fatty acids

Plant sources	Fish sources
<b>Oils &amp; margarines</b> Flaxseed oil Walnut oil Canola oil Soybean oil Margarine, omega-3 fortified Margarine, non-hydrogenated soy/canola	Salmon Wild – Atlantic or Alaska Canned – pink or sockeye Anchovies – canned in oil Atlantic Herring – from Canada or U.S. Sardines – any kind, with bone Mackerel – Atlantic Halibut – Pacific (Alaskan) Trout Crab – Dungeness, snow, stone Shrimp – Northern (Canada), Oregon pink, U.S. farmed Cod – any type
<b>Nuts, seeds, beans, &amp; grains</b> Salba Ground flaxseed Walnuts Cooked soybeans	
<b>Dairy</b> Omega-3 eggs Yogurt, omega-3 fortified Milk, omega-3 fortified	<b>Fish Oil Supplement – 1 g capsule</b>

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This information is not intended as a substitute for professional medical care. Ask your healthcare provider about this information if you have questions.