

## What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides (TGs) are one form of fat in your blood. High levels of TGs can increase your risk of heart disease, stroke, and pancreatitis. Eating healthy and being physically active can help lower your TG level.

## Blood levels of TGs (mg/dL) are:

**Normal:** less than 150    **Borderline:** 150-199    **High:** 200-499    **\*Very High:** more than 500

## Helpful Tips to Lower Your Triglycerides

### Limit Starchy Foods – Some can Increase TGs

like white breads, cereals, corn, crackers, pasta, potatoes, and white rice. When choosing starchy foods, keep portions small. **Rather than white, choose 100% whole grain** breads, cereals, crackers, pasta, and brown rice. Oats and dried beans and peas are also great choices.

### Avoid Alcohol or Consume Small Amounts – It can Increase TGs

Alcohol can increase your TGs, especially binge drinking with a high-fat meal. Alcohol also has extra calories that may cause you to be overweight. Extra body fat can increase your TGs.

### Limit Foods High in Sugar – They can Increase TGs

Try to limit foods high in both natural and added sugar (see box below). The National Lipid Association supports the American Heart Association (AHA) guideline to **limit added sugar to no more than 6 teaspoons for women and 9 teaspoons for men each day.**



### Include Healthy Fat at Meals

**Eat foods with healthy fats.** Choose small amounts of vegetable oil (canola, corn, olive, safflower, or soybean). Within your total daily calories, choose unsalted nuts, seeds, nut butters, or avocado at meals and snacks. **Eat fewer foods with unhealthy fats** like fatty meats, and high-fat dairy foods and desserts.

### Aim for a Healthy Weight

If you are overweight, eat smaller portions of high calorie foods and larger portions of vegetables and other low-calorie foods. Even a small amount of weight loss (5-10% of your current weight) may lower your TGs.

### Make Exercise Part of Your Day

Get at least 30 minutes of moderate-intensity exercise most days, or **at least 150 minutes** of exercise each week. To better lower your TGs and for weight loss, **work toward 200 to 300 minutes** of moderate-intensity exercise each week.

### How Much Sugar are You Eating and Drinking?

#### Drinks and Foods with Added Sugars

Sugar-sweetened soda, 12 oz.	10 – 11 teaspoons
Cranberry juice cocktail, 12 oz.	10 teaspoons
Lemonade, 12 oz.	10 teaspoons
Coffee Frappuccino, 12 oz.	9 teaspoons
Regular sports drink, 12 oz.	5 teaspoons
Yogurt, regular, 6 oz.	7 teaspoons
Pudding, ½ cup	5 teaspoons
Ice Cream, regular, ½ cup	4.5 teaspoons

#### Drinks and Foods with Natural Sugars

100% grape juice, 12 oz.	13 teaspoons
100% orange juice, 12 oz.	9 teaspoons
Grapes, 1 cup	5.5 teaspoons
Orange, 1 medium	3 teaspoons

### Tips to Achieve Your AHA Daily Added Sugar Goal and Lower Your Triglycerides

- Limit high-sugar foods like candy, cakes cookies, cheesecake, ice cream, pastries, pies, pudding, and some yogurts.
- Avoid sugary drinks like regular soda, fruit-flavored drinks, lemonade, coffee drinks, sports drinks, and energy drinks.

### Watch for Foods High in Natural Sugars

- Fruit and 100% fruit juices are high in natural sugars, but also many nutrients. Fruit can be part of a healthy eating pattern.
- Choose whole fruits at meals and for snacks.
- Limit fruit juice (even 100% fruit juice); a serving = ½ cup (4 oz.).

\*If your TGs are over 500 mg/dL, you will need to follow a special nutrition plan. Please consult your healthcare provider for additional treatment. This will often include a referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN).

A RDN can help you make a heart-healthy meal plan that works best for your lifestyle, and support you in your journey to change your nutrition habits.