

# Triglycerides

## What Is It?

Triglycerides is another name for storage fat. Extra calories from any source – carbohydrates, fat, and protein – may be converted to this storage fat.

## Why Is It Important?

High triglycerides (hypertriglyceridemia) can be determined by a fasting blood test and is usually performed when you have your cholesterol measured. An elevated triglyceride level is a risk factor for heart disease. It is sometimes associated with high blood pressure and diabetes.

## How Often Should I Have It Checked?

Every 5 years if normal, and if elevated every 1-2 years or as desired by your doctor. *Note:* Persons losing weight are breaking down stored fat and may have temporarily high levels.

|         |                 |
|---------|-----------------|
| <150    | Normal          |
| 150-199 | Borderline high |
| 200-499 | High            |
| ≥500    | Very high       |

*Source: National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.  
For more information: [www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep](http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep)*

## What Causes It To Be High?

- **Weight.** Being overweight is the most common cause of mildly elevated triglycerides.
- **Diet.** Too many calories, especially those from carbohydrates including sugar and also alcohol can raise triglycerides.
- **Family History.** If your parents or grandparents have or had high triglycerides, you should keep your levels checked.
- **Age.** Triglyceride levels usually increase as you age.
- **Medical Conditions.** Diabetes, hypertension, hypothyroidism, peripheral vascular disease, and kidney and liver disease are often linked with elevated triglycerides.
- **Medication.** Thiazide diuretics, beta blockers, and oral contraceptives can raise triglyceride levels.

## What Can I Do To Lower Triglycerides?

- ◆ **Lose weight if you need to.** Even 10 pounds can help.
- ◆ **Exercise.** Aerobic exercise, like walking, running or biking, can lower triglycerides and help you lose fat.
- ◆ **Lower your fat intake.** Limit the fats you add to foods. Bake, broil, or grill instead of frying foods, and limit your intake of high fat meats and cheeses. Men should attempt 40-60 grams of fat per day; women 20-40 grams of fat per day.
- ◆ **Eat less sugar,** including table sugar, honey, syrups, cakes, cookies, pies, sodas and sweetened tea.
- ◆ **Reduce alcohol consumption.** Alcohol can increase the liver's production of triglycerides.
- ◆ **Eat more fiber.** The "2 B's" are your best sources: Bran & Beans. Whole grain breads and cereals, fruits and vegetables and peas are also high in fiber.