

Nutrition and Hypertriglyceridemia (High Blood Triglycerides)

What is a triglyceride?

- Triglycerides are a type of fat found in the blood.
- Any excess calories that you eat are converted into triglycerides and stored as fat. If you regularly eat more calories than you expend, you may develop hypertriglyceridemia.
- High triglycerides can cause plaques to form within artery walls which increases risk of vascular disease, heart attack and stroke.
- High triglyceride levels are also associated with diabetes, metabolic syndrome, thyroid disorders. If your triglyceride levels are high, make sure your primary doctor is aware.

What makes triglycerides high?

- Increased triglyceride levels are directly related to intake of carbohydrates.
- There is also a condition called familial hypertriglyceridemia. In this case, triglycerides are often exceedingly high and difficult to control. In addition to improving your nutrition, you will most likely require medications to control your triglyceride levels.

How do I improve my triglyceride levels with my diet?

- To reduce triglycerides, reduce the amount of carbohydrates you are consuming.
- Limiting or eliminating alcohol intake can make a big impact on your triglyceride levels.
- It may also be helpful to increase your intake of healthy oils such as those from fatty fish.

What is a carbohydrate? How do I follow a carbohydrate controlled diet?

- Carbohydrates are found in sweets and starchy foods such as:
 - Sodas, juices, sweetened beverages
 - Desserts, cookies, baked goods
 - Breads, pastas, grains
 - Starchy vegetables like potatoes, peas, corn, and squash
 - Alcohol
- **Use the “hand-technique” to monitor portion sizes of carbohydrate-rich foods. Limit portions of carbohydrates to 1-2 hand-sized portions at each meal.**
 - 1 cupped hand: rice, pasta, potatoes, corn
 - 1 flat hand: bread, tortilla
 - 1 fist: fruit
- Limit or eliminate intake of:
 - Sodas, juices, sweetened beverages, alcohol
 - Desserts, candy, baked goods



My triglyceride levels are still high. What do I do?

- Medications and nutrition go hand in hand. While you should continue to follow a carbohydrate controlled diet, the addition of medications may be required to reach your triglyceride goals. Continue to work with your cardiologist to develop a plan tailored to your needs.