

Q. How can I reduce my high triglycerides?

A. Triglycerides is another name for fats in the blood. If your triglyceride level is above 200 mg/dL (with a fasting blood test), then it's definitely too high. A certain amount of fat in the blood is normal and even needed. If your blood fat level is too high, your risk of clotting and heart problems increases. In fact, the risk of a heart attack is 2 to 3 times higher for someone with high triglycerides compared to someone with low triglycerides. Fortunately, there are many ways you can bring your triglycerides down to a safe level:

- **First, see your doctor.** If your triglyceride level is high (200 mg/dL or higher), another health problem could be the cause. Your doctor can help you find out.
- **Be physically active.** Physical activity is one of the best ways to burn up fat in the blood. Even a one-hour walk in a single day can significantly lower your triglyceride level. Aim for 30-60 minutes of physical activity each day for best results. Keep in mind that within two days of not exercising, triglyceride levels will return to their high state. It's best to exercise every day.
- **Lose excess body weight.** Carrying excess body fat is a main cause of high triglycerides. Even losing 10-15 pounds can make a big improvement.



- **Stop smoking or using tobacco.** It's an excellent way to lower your triglyceride level and give your heart a break. If you need help quitting, ask your doctor for help.
- **Limit or avoid alcohol.** Alcohol is hard on the liver and can sometimes cause very high triglyceride levels. Avoid alcohol or if you choose to drink, keep your intake moderate. No more than one drink per day for women, and no more than two drinks per day for men.

- **Avoid refined carbohydrates.** Choose healthy, unrefined carbohydrates, such as whole grains, fruits and vegetables, legumes and seeds. Avoid refined carbohydrates such as white bread and flour products, sugar, soft drinks, sweets, snack foods. The American Heart Association recommends no more than 6 teaspoons of added sugar per day for women and no more than 9 teaspoons a day for men. Keep in mind that one soft drink may have 8-10 teaspoons of added sugar. Limit total carbohydrate intake to no more than 60 percent of your calories. Balance carbohydrates in your diet with healthy fats and healthy protein-rich foods.

If you've had a fasting blood test, the recommended triglyceride level is less than 150 mg/dL. A blood fat level over 200 mg/dL means you are at high risk. A blood fat less than 100 mg/dL is ideal.

