



## Triglycerides - What are they? Why do they Matter?

### What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides are a type of fat found in your blood. When you eat, your body converts any calories it doesn't need to use right away into triglycerides. The triglycerides are stored in your fat cells. Later, hormones release triglycerides for energy between meals. If you regularly eat more calories than you burn, you may have high triglycerides (hypertriglyceridemia).

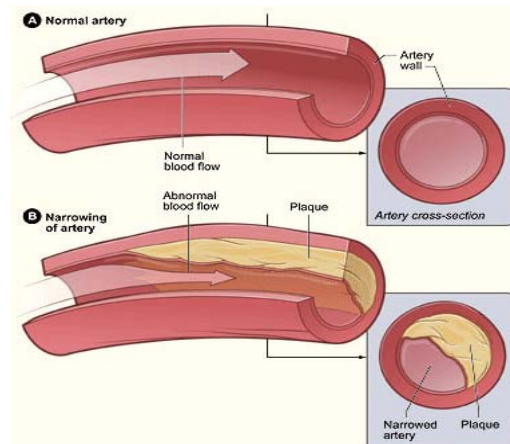
### What's considered normal?

A simple blood test can reveal whether your triglycerides fall into a healthy range.

Normal	Less than 150 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL)
Borderline high	150 to 199 mg/dL
High	200 to 499 mg/dL
Very High	500 mg/dL or above

### What's the difference between triglycerides and cholesterol?

Triglycerides and cholesterol are separate types of fat that circulate in your blood. Triglycerides provide your body with energy, and cholesterol is used to build cells and certain hormones.



### Why do high triglycerides matter?

High triglycerides may contribute to hardening of the arteries (atherosclerosis) or thickening of the artery walls — which increases the risk of stroke, heart attack and heart disease.

Sometimes high triglycerides are a sign of poorly controlled diabetes, low levels of thyroid hormones (hypothyroidism), liver or kidney disease, or the use of certain medications. High triglycerides can also result from rare genetic conditions.

### What's the best way to lower triglycerides?

Healthy lifestyle choices are key.

- **Lose excess pounds.** If you're overweight, losing the excess pounds can help lower your triglycerides.
- **Consume fewer calories.** Remember that excess calories are converted to triglycerides and stored as fat. Reducing your calories will reduce triglycerides.
- **Avoid sugary foods.** Simple carbohydrates, such as sugar, can cause a sudden increase in insulin production. This can increase triglycerides.
- **Limit your cholesterol intake.** Aim for no more than 300 milligrams of cholesterol a day — or less than 200 milligrams if you have heart disease. Avoid the most concentrated sources of cholesterol, including organ meats, egg yolks and whole milk products.
- **Choose healthier fats.** Trade saturated fat for healthier monounsaturated fat, found in olive, peanut and canola oils. Try eating fish instead of red meat. Fish are high in omega-3 fatty acids.
- **Avoid alcohol.** Alcohol is high in calories and sugar and has a particularly potent effect on triglycerides. Even small amounts of alcohol can promote high triglyceride levels.
- **Exercise regularly.** Aim for at least 30 minutes of physical activity on most or all days of the week. Regular exercise can boost "good" cholesterol while lowering "bad" cholesterol and triglycerides. Take a brisk daily walk, swim laps or join an exercise group.