

# Triglycerides

Triglycerides are a type of fat that is found in your blood. The amount of triglycerides you have in your blood depends on genetics and what (and how much) you eat and drink.

High triglycerides can be a sign of a medical condition called metabolic syndrome. Metabolic syndrome is a cluster of conditions that are found together. These include, high blood pressure, high triglycerides (and low HDL levels), insulin resistance and central adipose tissue.

## What Causes High Triglycerides?

Your body uses carbohydrates for energy. The carbohydrates your body does not use right away are stored as triglycerides (fat).

Triglyceride levels can also go up if you eat too much fat, especially saturated and trans fats (found in fatty meats, high fat dairy and high fat snack foods- like chips, cakes, cookies, donuts and deep fried foods).

## Why is it Important to Lower Your Child's Triglycerides?

Having high levels of triglycerides in your blood can put you at risk for a heart attack, stroke, diabetes or pancreatitis (an inflammation of the pancreas) especially if

they are accompanied by any or all of the conditions of metabolic syndrome.

## What is a healthy triglyceride level?

Target Range: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Value: \_\_\_\_\_

To keep fat intake and triglyceride levels in check, Canada's Food Guide recommends no more than 6 servings of added fat per day.



## Examples of one serving of added fat include:

One teaspoon of unsaturated oil or non-hydrogenated margarine.\*

One tablespoon of lower fat salad dressing.\*

Two teaspoons of peanut butter.\*

Two tablespoons of nuts or seeds.\*

One teaspoon of mayonnaise.

Two tablespoons of cream.

One tablespoon of cream cheese

\*Choose these healthier options more often.

## Steps to Lower Your Child's Triglycerides?

- 1- Encourage your child to participate in at least 60 minutes of physical activity everyday (e.g. walking, biking, playing outdoors, and sports).
- 2- Follow Canada's Food Guide:
  - Eat more whole grains (which are higher in fibre)
  - Eat more soluble fibre
  - Eat more fruits and vegetables
  - Choose lower fat dairy products
- 3- Choose unsaturated fats such as canola, olive, peanut and flaxseed oils more often.
- 4- Choose foods rich in Omega-3-Fatty Acids (e.g. salmon, ground flaxseed, and walnuts, avocado).
- 5- Choose lean meats when available and trim visible fat.
- 6- Minimize foods that contain trans fats (e.g. stick margarine, shortening, fried snack foods like crackers, cookies, donuts). "Hydrogenated" oil or "partially hydrogenated oil" means trans-fat.
- 7- Use cooking methods that reduce or eliminate added fat such as air-fry, bake, barbeque, and broil, poach, steam, and stew.

## Key Points to Think About

- Try to incorporate 60 minutes of moderate (sweating) physical activity into your child's daily routine.
- Replace sugary drinks with water or milk (in appropriate amounts).

- Choose more whole grain products (e.g. one slice of whole grain bread, ½ cup brown rice or whole wheat pasta).
- Include at least two servings of omega 3-rich fish (e.g. salmon, trout, and mackerel) per week.
- Choose low fat dairy products such as skim, 0.5% or 1% milk, yogurt with 1% milk fat (MF) or less, and cheese with 20% MF or less every day.
- Choose lean meats, remove all visible fat and follow Canada's Food Guide serving size.
- Read food labels to identify sources of saturated and trans fats and limit their intake.



## Goal Setting

- Start with small goals. If your goals are too big or if you are looking for results too quickly, you may be setting yourself up to fail. So aim to set small, realistic goals - ones that you can accomplish.
- Make a list of reasons why it is important to make these changes for your health. Use this list as a positive reminder to keep going with achieving your goals.
- Notice and focus on what you have achieved! Each and every positive step should be celebrated!
- Seek support from family, close friends and your health care team as needed.