

What to Ask at Your Next Healthcare Visit:

Triglycerides and Your Health

Questions to Ask Your Healthcare Team

Triglycerides are a type of fat in your blood, and high levels can increase your risk for serious health problems like heart disease, pancreatitis, heart attack, and stroke. You can often lower your triglycerides with healthy lifestyle changes and, if needed, medication. **At your next healthcare visit, ask your doctor what your levels are and what steps you can take to reduce your risk.**



To Understand Your Triglyceride Level



- If it's been a while since my last test, should I have my triglycerides checked?
- What is my triglyceride level?
- Is my level considered high or severe?
- What should my goal level be?

To Understand Your Risk



- What causes high triglycerides?
- How do high triglycerides affect my blood glucose or insulin resistance?
- Does having high triglycerides increase my risk for complications like heart disease or pancreatitis?

To Understand Your Treatment and Management



- Should I make changes to my eating plan?
 - Should I work with a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN)?
 - Should I avoid alcohol completely?
- How much physical activity should I get each week?
- Should I take medication to lower my triglycerides?

To Understand Your Follow-Up Care



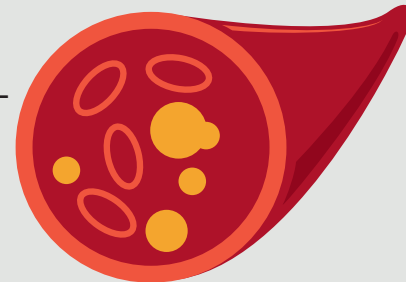
- How will we track my progress?
- When should I follow up with you?
- When should I have my triglycerides checked again?

You can manage your triglyceride levels with your treatment plan and support from your healthcare team. Bring these questions to your next visit with your doctor.

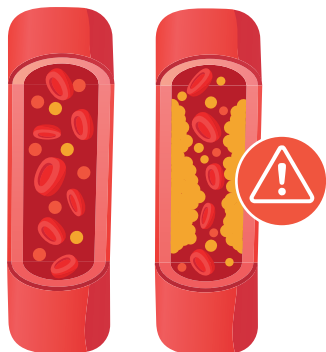
Diabetes & Triglycerides

What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides are a type of fat (lipid) that your body creates from calories that aren't used right away for energy. Other fats in your blood include HDL (high-density lipoprotein) and LDL (low-density lipoprotein). In adults, fasting triglyceride levels greater than 150 mg/dL are considered high triglycerides, while triglyceride levels greater than 500 mg/dL are considered severe hypertriglyceridemia. If you're living with diabetes, understanding the results of your triglyceride checks can help you take steps to avoid health issues if they're high.



Prevention Starts with Understanding



What are the risk factors for high triglyceride levels?

Health conditions and lifestyle factors increase your risk of high triglycerides, including:

- Eating more calories than you use
- Living with diabetes, obesity, or certain other health conditions
- Certain:
 - Foods
 - Medications
 - Genetic conditions
- A family history of high triglycerides or cholesterol



Why do triglycerides need to be managed?

Managing your triglycerides will lower:

- Your risk for heart disease or stroke
- Your risk for painful inflammation of your pancreas (pancreatitis)
- The amount of plaque buildup in your arteries, which leads to heart disease
- Your risk for developing prediabetes or type 2 diabetes



How can high triglycerides be prevented?

High triglyceride levels can be prevented when you:

- Manage your diabetes
- Follow an eating plan: a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you create an eating plan that meets your needs and helps you reach your goals
- Take your medications as prescribed

Symptoms

It's not likely that you'll have symptoms unless your triglycerides are very high and you start experiencing other health issues. Make sure to have your triglyceride levels checked even if you feel well. **Contact your doctor right away if you notice the following symptoms:**

- Small yellow bumps on the skin
- Symptoms of pancreatitis:
 - Abdominal pain in your upper abdomen that sometimes spreads to your back—the pain can be mild or severe and may last for several days
 - Fever
 - Nausea and vomiting
 - Swollen or tender abdomen



How Do You Manage Triglycerides?

Work with your healthcare team to create a treatment plan that meets your needs and helps you reach your triglyceride targets. This will include an eating plan, physical activity, and medications.



Eating Plans

Follow an eating plan: a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN) can help you create an eating plan that meets your needs and helps you reach your goals.



Physical Activity

Aim for 150 minutes of physical activity a week. This can be split into 30 minutes of physical activity five days a week. Two of your sessions should be strength training.



Medications

Talk to your doctor about whether a statin or other medications would help you reach your targets.

➔ Next Steps

Work with your healthcare team to take steps to lower your triglycerides, including:

- Having your triglyceride levels checked and talking about the results with your doctor
- Creating a treatment plan that's made for your needs to manage your triglycerides
- Staying connected with your healthcare team to keep up with regular health visits and lab work