

## More About Triglycerides

**E**levated triglycerides along with low HDL is quite common in Indian population. Along with elevated LDL, these also contribute to risk of heart attack and stroke. In addition, markedly elevated Triglycerides is a risk factor for acute pancreatitis.

Triglycerides are a different type of lipid than cholesterol. Your body makes triglycerides. You do not consume them in your food. Very low density lipoprotein or VLDL made in the liver carry triglycerides and cholesterol to the cells throughout the body.

**MEASURING TRIGLYCERIDES:** For accurate results, a triglyceride test should be performed after fasting. As a general rule, a Triglycerides level of 150 mg/dL or lower is considered normal. Levels between 150 and 500 mg/dL are considered elevated. Higher levels than 500 are considered severely elevated, which is often associated with inflammation of the pancreas.

**WHAT RAISES TRIGLYCERIDES:** The most common reasons for elevated triglycerides are overweight/obesity, a diet high in saturated fat or sugar, excessive alcohol intake, and sedentary lifestyle. Added sugar is another rich source of triglycerides. An apple contains natural sugar, but no added sugar. On the other hand, applesauce and apple juice are loaded with added sugar.

In some individuals, high triglyceride levels have a genetic cause. There are some secondary causes for high triglycerides which include poorly controlled diabetes, chronic kidney disease, and uncontrolled hypothyroidism, (under active thyroid.).

There is a long list of medications that are associated with elevated triglycerides, including immunosuppressive agents, psychiatric drugs and certain drugs for cancer and HIV, some hormone agents and three classes of cardiology drugs, which include beta adrenergic blockers, thiazide and loop diuretics and bile acid sequestrates.

WHAT TO EAT: WITH SO MANY FOODS TO BE AVOIDED, WHAT IS LEFT TO EAT ? A triglyceride lowering diet should include the following foods -Fruits. All fresh fruits, except those with high glycemic index, including pineapples, mangoes, bananas. -Vegetables.

All vegetables, except those with high glycemic index, which are potatoes, sweet potatoes, yams, avoid canned vegetables and frozen vegetables in a sauce. -Legumes. Eat beans, lentils, chickpeas, tofu, and other legumes. -Fish and seafood-if you're a non-vegetarian, eat fish at least twice a week. -Lean meat. -Dairy- choose low fat and fat free dairy products with no added sugar. -Grains.

Choose fiber, whole-grain bread, cereals, and brown rice over refined grain products -Fats. Liquid vegetable oils, like olive oil or avocado oil over solid fat, like butter, lard, bacon grease -Nuts and peanuts. Eat nuts and peanuts without added sugar or salt, but in moderation due to their high calorie content. -Desserts. Limit dessert to special occasions. -Alcohol.

Limit alcohol consumption or eliminate it altogether

Weight loss is most effective in lowering Triglyceride level by 50 to 70%. Secondary causes should also be addressed such as diabetes, chronic kidney disease and hypothyroidism.

MEDICATIONS: In addition to diet and exercise, statins may be prescribed for patient already at risk of heart attack and stroke. Controlling LDL is primary part of managing people with high triglycerides. Lowering LDL with statins will result in a big decrease in the cardiovascular events. Statins also reduce triglyceride levels.

If Triglyceride levels remain high, despite life style changes and statin therapy, other agents, such as fibrates or prescription omega-3 can be used. For individuals with very high triglycerides, and a risk of pancreatitis, a new drug called OLAZARSEN ( TRYNGOLZA ) is available. Consult with your physician, before considering any of these medications.

For most patients with elevated triglycerides, dietary changes and lifestyle changes, addressing any secondary causes and starting statin therapy, will lower their triglyceride levels and with it their cardiovascular risk.

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