

JACQUES F. LIWANPO

CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER

Choose with confidence, get the CA and CFP advantage



Triglycerides aren't all bad, but

what's important is to keep them under control They provide efficient energy storage, cushion your organs, transport certain vitamins, and keep you warm by providing insulation.

(by [Lisa Nelson, RD, LN](#)
Wednesday, July 09, 2008)

I've recently answered several questions related to triglycerides. These questions range from "What are triglycerides?" to "My triglycerides are 400, do I need to worry?" on to "Help, my triglycerides are 1200, how do I fix this?"

So, I'm going to answer all these questions here for those of you who are wondering, but haven't asked.

What are triglycerides?

Triglycerides are a type of fat. Actually, they're the most common type of fat in foods and in your body. When you eat foods containing fat and oil, such as butter, French fries, and chocolate chip cookies, the body takes the fat and stores it in your body as triglycerides. So, all those "fat cells" in your body are made up of triglycerides.

What do triglycerides have to do with cholesterol?

When you see your MD, he or she may order a "lipid panel" (lipid is a fancy term for fat). From the lipid panel you will learn your total cholesterol, HDL (good) cholesterol, LDL (bad) cholesterol, and triglycerides.

Total cholesterol = HDL + LDL + VLDL

Well, what in the world is VLDL? Not something you've probably seen or heard of before. VLDL is an acronym for Very Low Density Lipoproteins, another "bad" type of cholesterol. Triglycerides are used to calculate VLDL levels in your blood.

Triglycerides x 20% = VLDL (bad) cholesterol

Also, the liver uses triglycerides as fuel for cholesterol production. So, if you eat a high fat (triglyceride) diet, the liver will increase its production of cholesterol and put more cholesterol out into your blood.

What is a normal triglyceride level?

You want your triglycerides to be below 200 mg/dL. Borderline high triglycerides are from 200-500 mg/dL. Triglycerides are high risk above 500 mg/dL.

Some experts argue that 200 mg/dL is too high and that a normal level should be less than 150 mg/dL. The numbers I've listed above are the current guidelines from the National Cholesterol Education Program Expert's Panel.



JACQUES F. LIWANPO
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER

Choose with confidence, get the CA and CFP advantage



If your triglycerides are high your heart disease risk increases.

What you can do to lower triglycerides?

1. Limit simple sugars.

Unlike other types of cholesterol, triglycerides are affected by sugars you eat. You need to limit foods such as soft drinks, candy, baked goods, syrup, table sugar, jelly, and honey. A high intake of fruit juice can also raise triglyceride levels since juice contains a high content of natural sugars.

2. Limit alcohol.

If your triglycerides are borderline high or high risk, discuss your alcohol intake with your MD. My recommendation for borderline high (200-500 mg/dL) is to limit alcohol to no more than 1 drink per day for women, 2 drinks per day for men. One drink equals 12 ounces beer, 4 oz wine, or 1 ½ ounces liquor. If your triglyceride level is high risk (great than 500 mg/dL) I recommend NO alcohol. Again, discuss your situation with your MD.

3. Lose weight and/or maintain a healthy weight.

Many times weight loss alone will lower your triglycerides. Losing as little as 10% body weight could drop your triglycerides back to the normal range.

4. Choose a low fat diet

To achieve lower triglyceride levels, maintain a dietary intake of 30% or less of total calories

coming from fat. A healthy diet for normal triglyceride levels should consist of whole grains, beans, fruits, vegetables, low-fat dairy, and lean meat.

5. Increase your physical activity.

Boosting your activity can lower your triglycerides up to 40%. If you're not currently active, talk to your MD before starting an activity program. To reduce triglycerides, be physically active at least 30 minutes on 3 or more days each week. The more activity the better.

*Now, if you like this information and want to receive regular heart health and weight loss tips from dietitian Lisa Nelson, subscribe to **The Heart of Health** today!*

8 Foods that may lower cholesterol

© EatingWell

Following an overall healthy diet that's low in saturated fat and abundant in fruits and vegetables is wiser than obsessing over specific "super" foods. Still, some foods have been shown to give cholesterol levels an extra nudge in the right direction.

Oats: When women in a University of Toronto study added oat bran to an already heart-healthy diet, HDL-cholesterol levels—the beneficial kind—climbed more than 11 percent



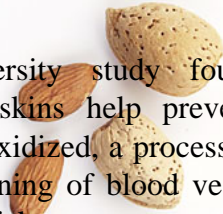
JACQUES F. LIWANPO
CHARTERED ACCOUNTANT
CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER



Choose with confidence, get the CA and CFP advantage

Almonds:

A 2005 Tufts University study found that substances in almond skins help prevent LDL cholesterol from being oxidized, a process that can otherwise damage the lining of blood vessels and increase cardiovascular risk.



Beans and lentils

In results reported in the Annals of Internal Medicine in 2005, LDL-cholesterol levels fell almost twice as far in volunteers on a low-fat diet who added beans and lentils (along with more whole grains and vegetables) to the menu.

Blueberries

Blueberries contain a powerful antioxidant called pterostilbene that may help lower LDL cholesterol, scientists at the Agricultural Research Service reported in 2004.

Barley

When volunteers in a 2004 USDA study added barley to the standard American Heart Association diet, LDL-cholesterol levels fell by up to 17 percent.

Avocados

The monounsaturated fats in avocados have been found to lower bad LDLs and raise good HDLs, especially in people with mildly elevated cholesterol.

Alcohol

Drinking a glass of wine with dinner—any alcoholic beverage, in fact—has been shown to raise good-cholesterol levels and lower the risk of a heart attack. (Excessive drinking, however, raises heart-disease danger.)