

# Healthy Eating to Lower Your Triglycerides

- Triglycerides are one of the fats in your blood.
- A high triglyceride level can increase your chance of having heart disease.
- Triglycerides higher than 10 mmol/L can increase your risk of developing pancreatitis, which is an inflammation of your pancreas.
- If you have diabetes, it is important to have good blood sugar control to keep your triglycerides within a healthy range.

## Tips to Lower your Triglyceride Level

### Limit Alcohol

- If your triglyceride level is:
  - **over 8 mmol/L, no alcohol is best**
  - under 8mmol/L, limit alcohol to two drinks per day or less

One drink is 5 oz. wine, 12 oz. beer, or 1½ oz. hard liquor.

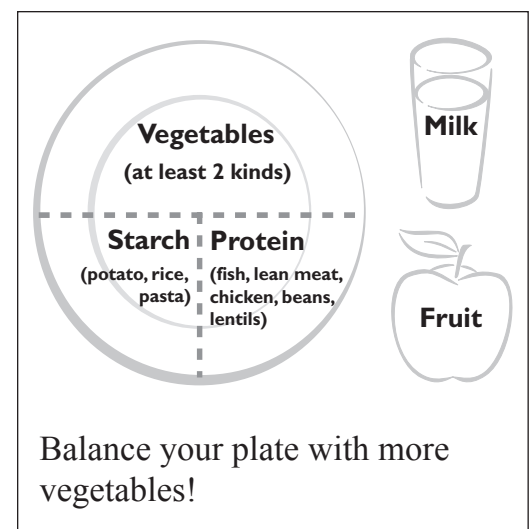
### Reduce Sugar and Sweets

- **The foods below are high in sugar. Enjoy them only once in a while.**
  - sweetened beverages such as regular pop, iced tea, Kool-Aid®, fruit drinks, lemonade, sweetened juices and Slurpee®-like drinks
  - chocolate and candies
  - desserts and sweet baked goods such as pie, cake and cookies
- Limit unsweetened fruit juices to ½ cup (125 mL) per day.
- Choose fruit for desserts or snacks.

Unsweetened fruit juice has a high natural sugar content equal to refined sugar in pop.

### Enjoy Starchy Foods in Moderation

- Starchy foods such as bread, pasta, rice and potatoes all turn into sugar when digested in your body. Large portions of starchy foods can increase your triglycerides.
- Eat a healthy balance of vegetables and protein foods so you do not eat too much of the starchy foods.
- Aim for 2 to 3 servings of starchy foods per meal.
- One serving of a starchy food is:
  - 1 slice bread or ½ bun
  - ½ cup cooked rice, pasta, potato, corn, grains or cereal
  - ¾ cup dry cereal
  - ¼ bagel or ½ English muffin



## Eat Less Fat

- Be sensible about the amount of fat you eat. Do not stop eating fat altogether.
- Choose “healthy” fats such as canola and olive oil, nuts, seeds, avocado, peanut butter, and non-hydrogenated soft margarine.
- **Have at least 3 servings of healthy fats\* a day.**
- **Limit the total amount of added fat to 6 servings a day.**

### One serving of added fat is:

- \*1 teaspoon oil or margarine
- \*2 teaspoons peanut butter
- \*10 nuts or 2 tablespoons seeds
- \*1 tablespoon bottled salad dressing
- \* $\frac{1}{8}$  avocado
- 1 slice side bacon
- 1 teaspoon butter or mayonnaise
- 1 tablespoon cream cheese or cheese spread
- 2 tablespoons sour cream or gravy
- 2 tablespoons half & half cream
- $\frac{1}{2}$  oz. (15 g) dark chocolate

*(You can have twice the serving size for “light” or “calorie-reduced” fats).*

## Enjoy More Fish

- Omega-3 fat is a fat found in fish that may lower your triglyceride level.
- Choose fresh, frozen, or canned fish at least **three times a week**. Avoid battered fish.
- The best choices are salmon, sardines, tuna, sea bass, herring, trout, and mackerel.
- Wild salmon oil supplements, 1 to 2 (1000 mg) capsules taken in the evening, may help lower your triglycerides. Speak with your doctor or dietitian.

## Decrease Your Waist Circumference

- Extra fat around your waist can increase your triglyceride level.
- Any decrease in your waist circumference can help lower your triglycerides.
- Using a measuring tape, wrap it around your waist at the level of your navel. Do not pull in your stomach muscles.
- Heart healthy waist measurements are **less than**:
  - 94 cm (37 inches) for men
  - 80 cm (31 $\frac{1}{2}$  inches) for women
  - Eating reasonable portions of healthy foods and being physically active will help you reach and stay at a healthy weight and waist circumference.

## My action plan to lower my triglycerides:

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Visit our website at [www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/nutrition](http://www.calgaryhealthregion.ca/nutrition)

*This material is designed for information purposes only. It should not be used in place of medical advice, instruction and/or treatment. If you have specific questions, please consult your doctor or appropriate healthcare professional.*