

Understanding Triglycerides

WATCH THE VIDEO ONLINE!

www.healthjourneysupport.com/cardiology/triglycerides

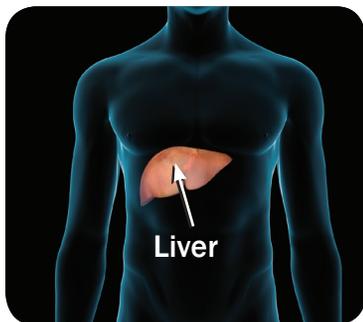
You or someone you know may have been diagnosed with high **triglycerides**. This handout explains what they are and how their levels are measured.

Triglyceride Basics

High triglycerides can have harmful effects on your body.

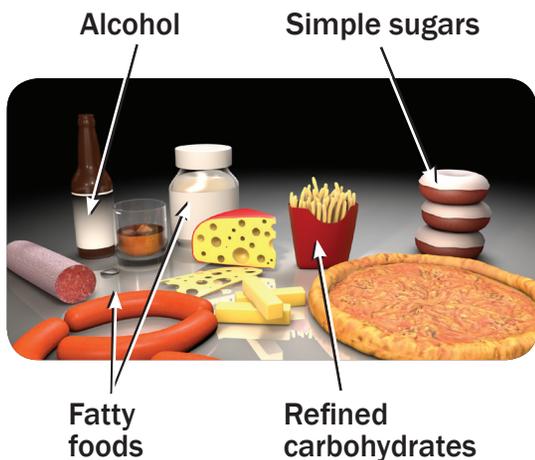
Triglycerides are a type of fat, or lipid, found in your blood. Your body uses triglycerides for energy.

One place triglycerides come from is your **liver**.



Triglycerides also come from the food you eat. Foods high in triglycerides include:

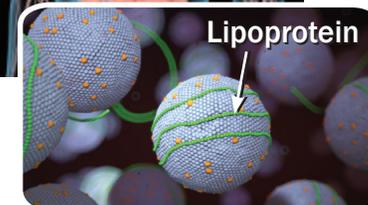
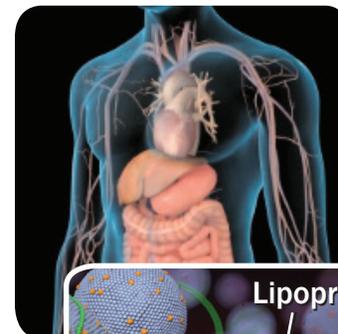
- **Fatty foods**, such as hot dogs and tropical oils
- **Refined carbohydrates** such as french fries
- Foods high in **simple sugars**, such as donuts
- **Alcohol**



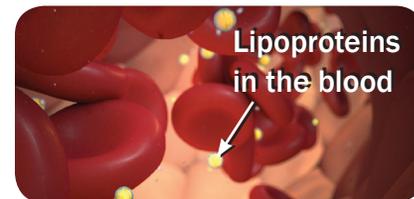
How Triglycerides Get to the Cells That Need Them

Triglycerides in food are digested and eventually reach your liver. In the liver, both the triglycerides from your food and those made in your liver are packaged together with proteins.

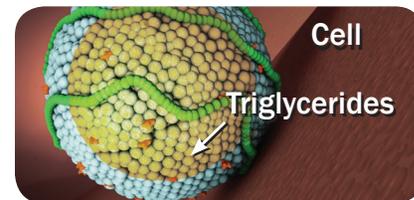
Each resulting molecule is called a **lipoprotein**.



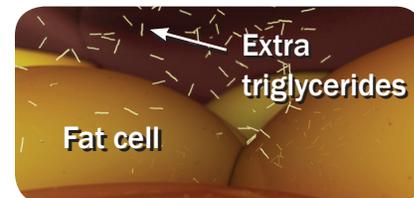
The lipoproteins travel throughout the body in your bloodstream.



They deliver triglycerides to your cells, which use them for energy.



Or, if you have more than you need, **fat cells** store the triglycerides as body fat.

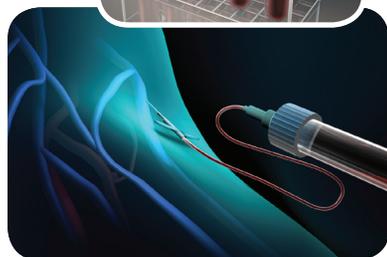


Understanding Triglycerides

A Blood Test for Triglycerides

If you are twenty years of age or older, the National Institutes of Health recommends you have a blood test every five years.

The test is called a **fasting lipoprotein profile**. It can reveal whether your triglycerides fall into a healthy range.



During this test, a blood sample will be taken from your arm after you have not eaten for 9 to 12 hours.

Triglyceride Levels:

- Normal: Less than 150 mg/dL
- Borderline high: 150 to 199 mg/dL
- High: 200 to 499 mg/dL
- Very high: 500 mg/dL or above

High triglycerides can increase your risk of:

- Heart disease
- Pancreatitis
- Cardiovascular events

Ask your doctor what your triglyceride level should be.

How to Maintain Healthy Triglyceride Levels

In many cases, lifestyle changes can help maintain healthy triglyceride levels. These changes include:

- Eating a diet low in sweets, refined carbohydrates, and alcohol
- Getting regular exercise
- Managing your weight
- Not smoking

Medications can also help treat impaired triglyceride levels.



If your doctor prescribed medication to treat high triglycerides, it is important to take it as directed.

Report any side effects you may have.

The information in this handout has been created and peer reviewed by graduate-level medical illustrators, followed by reviews from medical subject experts, either physicians or PhDs on the Nucleus Medical Review Board, to ensure medical accuracy and audience level appropriateness.

The handout is intended to supplement the information you receive from your health care provider and should never be considered personal medical advice. Always contact your health care provider with health questions and concerns.