

# Preventive Cardiology Program

HEALTHY HEART SERIES



**Boston Children's Hospital** | **Heart Center**

Until every child is well™



## Take on High Triglycerides

Triglycerides (TG) are molecules of fat that your body either uses for energy or stores for later. A high TG level can raise your risk for heart disease. GOOD NEWS...changes in diet and exercise can significantly lower your TG levels.

### Refined & Added Sugars

Limit white carbohydrates (breads, rice, pasta, crackers, tortillas, cereals). Eat starchy vegetables less often (corn, peas and potatoes) as these raise TG. Sugary drinks (juice, soda, sports drinks, sweetened teas and lemonades) also raise TG levels.

Choose whole grain carbohydrates whenever possible.

Don't drink your calories.



### Omega-3 Fats

Omega-3 fats, found in fatty fish, are heart-healthy fats that lower both cholesterol and TG levels.

These are found in fish such as salmon, tuna steaks, mackerel, herring, swordfish, blue fish, sardines and trout. Have fish two times per week.

Try new recipes:

- tuna sandwich
- baked haddock
- swordfish kabobs
- salmon salad
- sushi
- fish stew

### Balanced Meals

Avoid skipping meals.

Skipping meals often leads to overeating at the next meal, which may trigger a rise in your triglycerides if carbs are a big part of the meal.

Aim to eat 3 balanced meals and 2 small snacks each day.

**Remember: Do not eat or drink anything except water for 12 hours before the lab test—or the TG results will be elevated.**



### Physical Activity

Physical activity is another way you can control your TG levels. Even low-intensity activities such as walking can lower your TG levels.

Aim for 60 minutes of moderate intensity aerobic activity on most days of the week.

Limit screen time to 2 hours or fewer per day.

### Healthy Weight

Being overweight can lead to high TG levels, but research has shown that even when physical activity is combined with a small weight loss, it can reduce TG levels in many people.

Ask your health care provider to check your BMI (body mass index) which is one indicator of a healthy weight.

For specific questions about nutrition or exercise, please contact Skylar Griggs, MS, RD, LDN, clinical nutrition specialist, at 617-355-4329

For more general information about our Preventive Cardiology Program, call Boston Children's Heart Center at 617-355-0955 or go to [bostonchildrens.org/hearthealth](http://bostonchildrens.org/hearthealth)