

When Your Triglycerides Are Over 1,000 mg/dL

Advice from the National Lipid Association Clinician's Lifestyle Modification Toolbox

When your triglycerides are over 1,000 mg/dL, you may be at risk of pancreatitis.

The right dietary choices are the key to treatment.

Triglycerides (TGs) are the main form of fat in food. When we eat foods with fat, TGs are carried in “chylomicrons” in the blood. When your body is not able to break down chylomicrons very well, your blood TGs may rise to 1,000 mg/dL or higher. TGs at this level can inflame your pancreas and cause other health problems.

A Very-Low-Fat Chylomicron-Clearing Meal Plan is Key to Lowering Severely Elevated TGs

The main focus for chylomicron clearing is a very-low-fat meal plan with no more than 20–30 grams of fat per day (about 10–15% of your total daily calories). All meals are very low in fat and high in fiber. Also, the following are important:

- No alcohol, including beer or wine
- No fruit juice, soda pop, or sweetened beverages
- No sweets or desserts (e.g. cakes, candies, cookies, pies, pastries, ice cream)
- No added sugars (e.g. syrup or honey)

Blood TGs will improve in about 2 weeks for most people on the chylomicron-clearing meal plan. Once TGs are below 500 mg/dL, you may be able to slowly add more fat to your diet. Eating foods high in fat, sugar, or alcohol will cause your TGs to rise again. If you have a very rare genetic cause of very high blood TGs, you will need to stay on a very-low-fat meal plan for life. Most people with very high TGs will benefit from referral to a registered dietitian nutritionist (RDN). An RDN can help you plan a menu so you get all the nutrients you need. This may mean taking nutritional supplements like MCT oils.

Use the New Nutrition Facts Label or a food-tracking app to find the amount of fat and sugars in food. Choose items lowest in total fat and sugars. Measuring food helps you keep fat and sugar low.

Nutrition Facts	Amount/serving	% Daily Value*	Amount/serving	% Daily Value*
	Total Fat 8g ✓	10%	Total Carbohydrate 20g	7%
Saturated Fat 5g	24%	Dietary Fiber 0g	1%	
Trans Fat 0g		Total Sugars 0g		
Cholesterol 30mg	9%	Includes 8g of Added Sugars ✓	19%	
Sodium 75mg	3%	Protein 2g	4%	

*The % Daily Value (DV) tells you how much a nutrient in a serving of food contributes to a daily diet. 2,000 calories a day is used for general nutrition advice.

Ingredients: Wheat flour, white, all-purpose, enriched, bleached. Butter, without salt. Sugars, granulated. Egg, whole, raw, fresh. Leavening agents, baking powder, double-acting, sodium aluminum sulfate. Salt, table. Contains: Egg, Wheat.

A Sample Chylomicron Eating Plan

Breakfast

- 1 cup non-fat milk
- 1 cup cooked oatmeal (plain) with cinnamon **OR**
- 1 cup unsweetened dry oat cereal **OR**
- Egg white and vegetable omelet cooked in a non-stick pan, with 100% whole-wheat toast

Each Lunch and Dinner

- 3–4 oz. skinless breast of chicken or turkey or low-fat fish
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked beans or lentils
- 3 servings non-starchy vegetables (1 serving = $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cooked or 1 cup raw)
- $\frac{1}{2}$ –1 cup starchy vegetable or whole grain, like brown rice, or 1–2 slices whole-wheat bread
- Optional: 1 serving fruit and 1 cup non-fat milk **OR**
- 6 oz. of plain, non-fat regular or Greek yogurt

Snacks

- Non-starchy vegetables with fat-free dip
- Fat-free cottage cheese with raw vegetables

For Flavor and Variety

- Use spices, fresh herbs, vanilla, vinegars, fat-free broth, 1 tsp. mustard, fat-free mayo, zero-calorie sweeteners, sugar-free gelatin, or up to 2 tbsp. de-fatted powdered peanut butter

Note: This diet may also help those with TGs between 500 and 999 mg/dL.

It is important to work with an RDN to be sure your meal plan meets your long-term nutrition needs.

Other Tips to Clear Chylomicrons

- Your healthcare provider will likely prescribe medications and dietary changes to lower your blood TGs.
- If you take other medications, review them with your healthcare provider. Some medications can raise TGs.
- If you are overweight, weight loss and daily physical activity may help lower your TGs. Slowly increase your activity. Try and work toward 150 minutes of activity each week.
- If you have diabetes, work with your healthcare provider to control your blood sugar.