



Matters of the Heart

A monthly newsletter about cardiovascular disease prevention and wellness promotion.

Tips to Reduce Your Triglycerides

If you've been keeping an eye on your blood pressure and cholesterol levels, there's something else you might want to check out: triglycerides. Having a high level of triglycerides can increase your risk of heart disease. But the same lifestyle choices that promote healthy blood pressure and cholesterol levels can help lower your triglycerides, too.

Triglycerides are a type of fat found in your blood. When you eat, your body changes any calories it doesn't need to use right away into triglycerides. The triglycerides are stored in your fat cells. Later, hormones release triglycerides for energy between meals. If you regularly eat more calories than you burn, especially carbohydrates and fats, you may have high triglycerides.

There are some simple ways to make sure your triglycerides are under control:

1. **Know your number.** Sign up for a free health screening from Tri-County Health Network, visit your primary care provider or visit a health fair.
2. **Avoid drinking your calories.** Some drinks have added sugars in them that can raise your triglyceride number. And it's not just sodas and energy drinks – juices that are marketed as being healthy may still have a lot of sugar (and calories). Water is a healthier choice and will give you more energy in the long run.
3. **Choose whole grains.** Products like white bread, regular pasta, white rice, and white potatoes can raise the levels of fat in your blood. Try whole grain products like brown rice, quinoa, or barley instead.
4. **Drink alcohol in moderation (if at all).** Have no more than one drink a day if you're a woman and two if you're a man. If your triglyceride levels aren't lowering enough despite your efforts, your doctor may recommend skipping alcohol altogether.
5. **Be active.** Lack of movement makes it hard for your body to process blood sugar and triglycerides normally. Move more each day – walking is a great way to stay active.
6. **Take medication if you need it.** Some people may need more help keeping their triglycerides under control. Visit your health care provider and discuss medications that can help. Take your medications as directed, and don't stop without talking to your provider.

Tri-County Health Network is a nonprofit entity committed to improving the quality and coordination of health and healthcare services by increasing healthcare access and integrative health services at lower costs.

Health Is More Than Health Care

Good health depends on more than just health care. Our health is affected by where we live, the work we do, the education we receive, and our income. I work with residents to improve their health and reduce their chances of developing heart disease and diabetes. There are three recommendations that I often make to clients: 1. Eat more fruits, vegetables, whole grains, and lean meats; 2. Increase physical activity; and 3. Take your prescribed medications. For some clients, these are strategies they can incorporate into their lives. But not everyone can.

One client, let's call her Jane, is a single mother working two part time jobs. She wants to buy more fresh fruit and vegetables, but can't afford them from her local grocer. Canned foods, which are high in sodium and/or sugar, are the basis of most of the meals she cooks. Jane doesn't have much time to cook, so sometimes prepackaged foods are the most efficient way to feed her kids – like frozen pizza and chicken fingers. Speaking of time, exercise is low on her priority list because she'd rather spend time with her kids. During the summer she comes up with ways to get the entire family exercising by playing outside, but winter is a tough challenge. Jane doesn't have insurance through her workplaces, and she sometimes has to choose between paying for her prescriptions or paying for the heat to stay on. So my suggestions might be well meaning, but how helpful are they really? Is health care the solution to the challenges Jane faces, or do we need to do something more?

The Tri County Health Network has received funding from the Colorado Trust to support local discussions about what we can do as friends and neighbors to support each other's health and well-being. These discussions will focus on “health equity.” Health equity is a vision of communities where every person has the chance to achieve his or her full health potential. When health equity is achieved, no one is prevented from fulfilling their potential because of their income, job, race, or where they live. Discussions about health equity will look at some of the challenges our friends and neighbors face in affording healthy food, having time to cook and exercise, have health insurance coverage that pays for preventative care and prescriptions, and much more. Health equity is about more than health care, it's about friends and neighbors caring about their community's health overall. As a community, we work, learn, play, and live together. Let's make sure that everyone has the chance to enjoy life to its fullest (and longest) in our beautiful town.

Colorado Trust Health Equity Learning Series

The Colorado Trust's vision is that all Coloradans have fair and equal opportunities to lead healthy, productive lives regardless of race, ethnicity, income or where we live. The Trust defines health equity as ending inequalities that affect racial, ethnic, low-income and other vulnerable populations, so that everyone will have fair and equal opportunities to achieve good health. They are posting online presentations, the Health Equity Learning Series, aimed to increase knowledge and awareness of health equity through presentations from experts discussing factors that increase disparities and solutions that advance health equity. To learn more, visit:

<http://www.coloradotrust.org/program-areas/health-equity/health-equity-learning-series>

**Tri-County Health
Network**

Main Office:
PO Box 4222
Telluride, CO 81435

Phone:
970.708.7096

Fax:
888.595.3242

E-Mail:
info@tchnetwork.org

Web Site:
Tchnetwork.org

Apple Turkey Gyro

Ingredients

- 1 cup sliced onion
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 2 cups sliced red bell pepper
- 2 cups sliced green bell pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil
- ½ pound turkey breast, cut into thin strips
- 1 medium apple, cored and sliced
- 6 whole wheat pitas, lightly toasted
- ½ cup lowfat plain yogurt (optional)
- ½ tablespoon dried parsley
- ½ teaspoon dried oregano



Preparation

1. In a nonstick skillet, sauté onion, lemon juice, and bell peppers in oil until crisp-tender.
2. Stir in turkey and cook until turkey is fully cooked. Remove from heat and stir in apple.
3. Fold pita in half and fill with apple mixture; drizzle with yogurt. Serve warm.



Makes 6 servings. 1 gyro per serving.
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 15 minutes

Nutrition information per serving: Calories 215, Carbohydrate 33 g, Dietary Fiber 5 g, Protein 14 g, Total Fat 4 g, Saturated Fat 1 g, Trans Fat 0 g, Cholesterol 25 mg, Sodium 259 mg

This recipe and more nutrition information can be found at <http://www.cachampionsforchange.cdph.ca.gov/en/index.html>

Protect Your Heart From Stress – Relax

Moving is important for our overall health, especially our hearts. But mindful relaxation a few minutes each day could help lower the risks of cardiovascular disease.

Mindful relaxation is also called meditation. There are many ways to meditate. Some people use deep breathing, quiet, and focus on something that makes them feel relaxed. This can include a favorite memory, color, phrase, or sound. The point is that it helps you let go of worries and feel peaceful

“Think of it as a 20- or 30-minute vacation from the stress in your life,” said Richard A. Stein, professor of medicine and director of the exercise and nutrition program at New York University’s Center for Prevention of Cardiovascular Disease.

Stress is your body’s natural alarm system. You may have heard of the “flight or fight” response. This is when adrenaline is released in your body, and you begin to breathe faster and your heart rate and blood pressure rise. “When we were cavemen, that adrenaline helped us be ready if a tiger was going to attack,” Dr. Stein said. “Today, all the tigers are in our heads.”

For people living with heart disease, mindful relaxation can help reduce stress. “Meditation is a way of allowing you to come to balance in your life,” Dr. Stein said. “It can also help you to sleep better, which is a very important restorative part of physical health.” There are countless types of meditation, so it’s important to find an approach that you feel comfortable with, Dr. Stein said.

“Find what works for you,” Dr. Stein said. “Maybe it’s just listening to your favorite music while you walk at a moderate pace.”

Mediation may use sound or touch, for example the ringing of a bell, chanting, beads or a simple object to help the mind to focus. Not all meditation requires sitting still. For example, tai chi, also called “moving meditation,” incorporates gentle movements that require deep concentration and balance. Yoga is an ancient practice of stretching and breathing used to prepare the body for long periods of meditation. Prayer is a meaningful way to focus your mind and connect to your faith.

Some folks don’t like the term “meditation” because it sounds too “touchy-feely.” That’s fine! But don’t miss out on the benefits of relaxation strategies completely. Just lying down and counting your breath can be incredibly relaxing.

While meditation can offer a technique for lowering stress, and your risk for heart disease, Dr. Stein said it can’t replace other important lifestyle changes like eating fruits and vegetables, losing or managing weight, reducing salt or getting regular physical activity. It’s also not a substitute for any medication your doctor may have prescribed as part of your treatment plan.

“Meditation should be an adjunct to prescribed medications and dietary and exercise programs, not a replacement,” Dr. Stein said.

Eat Healthy On \$4 A Day

Leanne Brown, a food-studies scholar and enthusiastic cook in New York, is working to help more people eat healthy on a budget. Most recently she wrote *Good and Cheap*, a free PDF cookbook for low-income and Food Stamps recipients. The cookbook features meals that total \$4 per day per person. She also spearheaded a project to fund a print run of *Good and Cheap* to get it into the hands of those who can’t afford a copy.

According to Leanne, “I think everyone should eat great food every day. Eating well means learning to cook. It means banishing the mindset that preparing daily meals is a huge chore or takes tremendous skill. Cooking is easy — you just have to practice.”

Some of Leanne’s recipes include:

- Smoky Roasted Cauliflower
- Kale Salad
- Potato and Kale Rolls
- Zucchini Fettuccine
- Shrimp and Grits
- Peach Coffee Cake

To read Leanne’s recipes and tips for eating and shopping well, visit <http://www.leannebrown.com/>



Small Steps to Better Health: Walking Log

How much physical activity do I get every day? Use a pedometer to measure how many steps you take each day. For a free pedometer, call Nicole at (970)318-6360. For the next week, wear your pedometer every day. Record the number of steps you take each day. This will help you to set your goal.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Number of Steps							

How much physical activity should I get every day?

- **Walk More:** To prevent chronic disease and maintain your health, adults should try to take **7,500 to 10,000 steps** each day, seven days a week.
- **Sit Less:** Avoid sitting for long periods of time if you can. Take breaks to stretch and walk around.
- **Exercise:** Five days a week 3,000 of the minimum 7,500 daily steps should be taken at a faster pace. Try walk at a rate of 100 steps per minute. This equates to a brisk walk of 3,000 steps with a raised heart rate for 30 minutes.

My Physical Activity Goal: Based on how physically active you are right now and how active you would like to be, choose how many steps you would like to take each day.

My goal is to take _____ steps each day.

Three things I need to take to meet my goal: (example: 1. walk whenever I can, 2. try new physical activities that will keep me moving, 3. find a buddy to join me in my physical activity routine)

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

My reward for meeting my goal is: (examples: go dancing, plan a fun activity with my family)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Week 1: Number of Steps							
Week 2: Number of Steps							
Week 3: Number of Steps							
Week 4: Number of Steps							

Client Success Stories: Small Steps Towards Greater Health

"I did home visit with a gentleman who two years ago first was screened through our program. At that time, his risk score for heart disease and stroke was more than 20% - which is high risk. His risk was mostly due to his very high blood pressure. The Community Health Worker (CHW) working for TCHNetwork at the time told the client that she was very concerned about his health due to his hypertension. She strongly suggested that he see his primary care provider, something he hadn't done in years, to follow up. The client took her advice, and was given a prescription for a small amount of blood pressure medication. When I met with him, he was excited to see the difference in his risk score. And excited he should be - his bp went from 170/100 to 126/74! His risk score is now 6%! The client said that the CHW was the person responsible for this change - he never would have gone to the doctor if she hadn't expressed such sincere concern for his wellbeing." - Community Health Worker

TCHNetwork Provides Free Dental Services to Children

San Juan Kids Cavity Prevention Program (Skippy) is a mobile, school-based oral health program serving children up to 14 years old. TCHNetwork works with 16 schools throughout San Miguel, Ouray, Montrose & Delta counties to provide oral health screenings twice a school year. Depending on each student's need, this program can provide oral exams, cleanings, fluoride treatments, sealants and oral hygiene instruction. Skippy was created in 2008 in response to the limited number of dentists that treat children or accept Medicaid/CHP+. Skippy offers these free preventive services to improve the oral health by helping prevent cavities in our local children. A toothbrush, toothpaste and floss are sent home with the child along with a take-home sheet. If follow-up care is required, a Skippy Navigator will call the child's home to speak to the parent/guardian to help locate a dentist for any restorative care. Visit the TCHNetwork website to learn more at:

<http://tchnetwork.org/programs/>



Free Confidential Health Screenings

Cholesterol, Blood glucose, Blood pressure, Height & Weight

Contact one of TCHNetwork's Community Health Workers to schedule an appointment or home visit:

Norwood, Naturita, Nucla & Paradox

Deon Tempfer 970.327.4004

Montrose

Darlene Mora 970.708.4719

Ridgway, Ouray & Telluride

Nicole Gans 970-318-6360