My cholesterol seems to be within the normal range, but I have elevated triglycerides. What does this mean?

High serum triglycerides (blood fats) may be a result of abnormal factors, such as obesity, diabetes, insulin resistance, low levels of high-density lipoproteins (HDL, the good cholesterol)—even a diet high in refined carbohydrates. interact with the HDL, and whether the relationship between heart disease and triglycerides is a direct result of the high triglycerides or a result of the lowered HDL is an often-debated subject.

It is suggested that women may have greater risk from high triglycerides.

Whatever all these discussions produce, we do know that when triglyceride levels are between 150 and 1,000 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dl), a big increase in the risk of heart attack results.

So you need to cut your saturated and total fat intake, and your refined carbohydrate intake. Whole grains and increased fiber are important. Exercise also is essential. Medications may be indicated, but your doctor can tell you of these.

The usual medication combination is of a “statin,” or cholesterol-lowering, medication, plus niacin—which is a vitamin in the B group.

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While this column is provided as a service to our readers, Drs. Landless and Handysides unfortunately cannot enter into personal and private communication with our readers. We recommend that you consult with your personal physician on all matters of your health.