



Cholesterol Medications

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Important things to remember about your cholesterol

1. We get about 25% of our cholesterol from our diet and the rest (75%) is produced within our own bodies.
2. There are different types of cholesterol. Some are considered “good” and some are considered “bad” cholesterol. High-density lipoprotein (HDL) or “good” cholesterol is protective against heart attack and stroke. Low-density lipoprotein (LDL) or “bad” cholesterol can build up on the walls of your blood vessels, narrowing them, and putting you at higher risk for heart attack and stroke. Triglycerides are also “bad” cholesterol that when found in excess in your blood, can lead to heart disease.
3. Cholesterol goals may be different for different people depending on your heart disease risk factors.
4. Take your medication daily and as directed by your provider. Do not cut your pills in half unless instructed to do so.
5. If you are having side effects, it is often easy to switch medications so notify your health care provider.
6. There are many low cost options for cholesterol medications. Many medications are on the \$4 list at your local pharmacy. If cost is any issue for you, notify your provider to discuss switching to a low cost medication.

Statins

- These medications are typically the #1 choice for cholesterol reduction due to their high rates of effectiveness.
- Common names: atorvastatin, simvastatin, lovastatin, pravastatin, and rosuvastatin.
- These medications work by blocking a substance your body needs to make cholesterol.
- Some side effects of these medications include: body and muscle aches, nausea, diarrhea, and constipation. Rarely, they cause liver & muscle problems or and increased blood sugar.
- Avoid grapefruit juice while taking these medications.

Fibrates

- Common names: fenofibrate, gemfibrozil.
- These medications work by increasing the breakdown of cholesterol and promoting cholesterol removal from the body.
- Fibrates can cause constipation, diarrhea, heartburn, headache, or muscle pain.

Other commonly used cholesterol medications include niacin, omega 3 fatty acids, and bile acid binding resins (colestid, colesevelam, and cholestyramine sucrose.) For more information on these, or any, medications, talk to your local pharmacist or health care provider

Cholesterol absorption inhibitors

- Ezetimibe is the only medication on the market in this category.
- It works by stopping cholesterol from being absorbed in the small intestine.
- Headache, diarrhea, dizziness, and joint pain are side effects of this medication.

There are several combination medications so you may be taking only 1 pill, but that pill may contain 2 medications

