

Get the Facts: What You Need to Know About Statins



We hear a lot about lowering our cholesterol by eating a low-fat diet and getting regular exercise. But for some people, making healthy changes isn't enough. That's when statins come in.

Statins are medicines that reduce the risk of heart disease and stroke, two of the leading causes of death in the United States. These medicines keep the liver from making cholesterol and help it get rid of cholesterol in the blood.

Statins may help if you have high cholesterol, heart disease or are at high risk for heart disease or stroke. Things that can put you at high risk include being a current or former smoker, stress, having diabetes and/or high blood pressure, having a family history of heart disease or stroke, or being overweight. This means you do not have to have high cholesterol to benefit from taking statins.

What Are Some Examples of Statins?

Below is a list of statins you may have heard of and where you can find them on the SCAN Formulary (*Note: The SCAN Formulary and the Formulary tier are subject to change, especially from year to year.*):

Statin	Formulary Status
Atorvastatin (Lipitor®)	Tier 1
Lovastatin (Mevacor®)	Tier 1
Pravastatin (Pravachol®)	Tier 1
Simvastatin (Zocor®)	Tier 1
Rosuvastatin (Crestor®)	Tier 1

Statins can also be combined with other cholesterol-lowering and blood pressure drugs into one pill but may have higher copays. If you have questions about these combination pills and their copays, please talk to your pharmacist.

Please see back of page for more information.

Get the Facts: What You Need to Know About Statins (Cont.)

Frequently Asked Questions About Statins

Do I need to take a statin if I don't have high cholesterol?

Even if your cholesterol is normal, you may still be at high risk for a heart attack or stroke. Diet and exercise might still not be enough to lower your risk if you:

- Are a current or former smoker
- Are overweight
- Have a lot of stress
- Have a family history of heart attack or stroke
- Have a condition like diabetes or high blood pressure or heart disease

That's why it's important to share your family history with your doctor and ask if statins will help you.

What if I've already tried a statin but didn't like the side effects?

Most people don't have side effects when taking statins, but a small number feel muscle pain. Serious muscle problems are rare. In general, the overall benefits of statins in preventing heart attack, stroke or death related to heart attack or stroke outweigh the risks of possible side effects.

If you have any concerns, please talk to your doctor about the risks and the benefits of taking statin medications. If you're having side effects from your statin medication, it's important to let your doctor know before you stop taking it. Tell him or her about the other medications you're taking—the side effects might be coming from a bad interaction between your medications and the statin.

Your doctor will be able to tell you if a different statin or the same statin at a lower dose might work better.

Do I need to take a statin if I'm already taking a different medication for my cholesterol?

Statins are recommended for most people over other cholesterol medicines. Statins are one of the few cholesterol medicines that have been directly associated with preventing heart attack and stroke or death related to heart attack or stroke.

How should I take a statin?

Your doctor will tell you the statin dose that's right for you and how often to take it.

Ask your doctor what time of day you should take your statin; some statins work better when taken in the evening.

Make sure to follow your doctor's directions and don't stop taking the statin or change the dose or timing of the medication without your doctor's approval.

How long will I need to be on a statin?

Statins are usually needed long term so you may be on the medication for the rest of your life.

If you have any questions about statins, please talk to your doctor or pharmacist.