

DIABETES AND STATIN MEDICATIONS

What is a statin medication and why do I need it?

Heart attacks and strokes are the most common causes of death among people with diabetes.

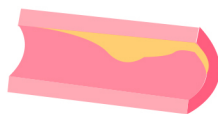
Statin are prescription medications that can help prevent a heart attack or stroke by reducing the amount of cholesterol your body makes.

Too much cholesterol in the blood can cause atherosclerosis. This is a build-up of dangerous plaque in the walls of your arteries. If a piece of plaque breaks off, it can cause a blood clot or block in your artery, stopping the flow of blood. If blood is blocked in an artery on the heart, it causes a heart attack. If it happens in the brain, it causes a stroke.

UNHEALTHY ARTERIES

An unhealthy artery or blood vessel in your body contains cholesterol, fat, and other materials that can narrow and limit blood flow.

1. Plaque builds up, causing scarring in the walls of the artery. This causes plaque to stick.



2. As plaque builds up on the artery wall, it slows or blocks the flow of blood. This can put you at risk of heart attack or stroke.



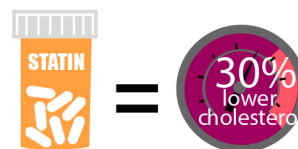
What are the benefits of statins?

Nearly 7 in 10 adults age 65 or over who have diabetes die of heart disease.



Almost 2 out of every 10 adults who have diabetes die of stroke.

People with diabetes who take a statin are less likely to have a heart attack, stroke, or problems with their blood vessels – even if they don't already have atherosclerosis.



Taking a statin can lower cholesterol by 30% or more.

Once you start taking a statin, you will need to keep taking it to continue these benefits. Talk with your healthcare provider before you stop taking statins or any other prescription medication.



Continued Benefits!

Your healthcare provider will choose a statin and dose level that's right for you.

What are some of the side effects of statins?

Most people can take statins without any problems. Very few people have serious side effects and, in most cases, the benefits of taking statins are greater than the risks. Some side effects are:

SORE/ACHING MUSCLES

About 5 in 100 people may experience this side effect. The aching can be mild to severe depending on the person, and often occurs in the legs. Often, an alternative statin or lower dose can help. In rare, severe cases, muscle cells can break down and damage kidneys if symptoms are ignored. This happens in about 3 of 20,000 people. Tell your doctor if you experience sore or aching muscles.

RAISED BLOOD SUGAR

Taking a statin may raise your blood glucose (sugar) slightly, but your provider will monitor this closely. About 1 in 225 people may experience this side effect.

CHANGES IN LIVER FUNCTION

These changes are rare (about 2 in 100 people), depend on the dose, and don't usually cause long-term damage. Your healthcare provider can order blood tests now and then check the health of your liver.

PROBLEMS COMBINING STATINS WITH OTHER MEDICINES

To avoid reactions with any other medications, tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you are taking, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, supplements, minerals, and herbal products.

MYTHS ABOUT STATINS

Statins cause memory changes. Although memory loss and confusion have been reported with statin use, these effects are reversible after the medication was stopped. There is not current evidence that statins cause this side effect.

Taking CoEnzyme Q10 (CoQ10) helps with side effects. Many patients learn about CoQ10 through online searches. There are currently no studies that prove CoEnzyme Q10 provides any benefits to people who are taking statins.

What type of statin medications are available?

There are several different statin medications. Examples include:

- **Atorvastatin** (Lipitor)
- **Rosuvastatin** (Crestor)
- **Simvastatin** (Zocoz)
- **Pravastatin** (Pravachol)

Your doctor will recommend a medication based on your specific situation.

What you can do:

You can help lower your cholesterol levels by making some simple changes every day. The American Heart Association recommends:

- Getting at least 30 minutes of exercise most days of the week
- Eating lots of fruits and vegetables
- Choosing chicken and fish and avoiding foods high in saturated fats (pizza, cheeseburgers, chips, cookies, ice cream)
- Keeping portions small to help you maintain a healthy body weight
- Not using tobacco products or e-cigarettes. Ask your doctor for information on how to quit.

To learn more, go to www.heart.org. Even if you do choose to take statins, it is important to exercise and eat healthy.

