

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.

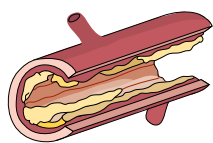
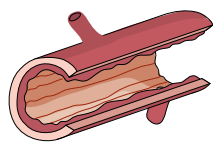
Statin [STAT-ins] are prescription medications that can help prevent a heart attack or stroke by reducing the amount of **cholesterol** [koh-LESS-ter-ahl] your body makes.

Too much cholesterol in the blood can cause **atherosclerosis** [ath-uh-roh-skler-OH-sis]. This is a build-up of dangerous **plaque** [plak] 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

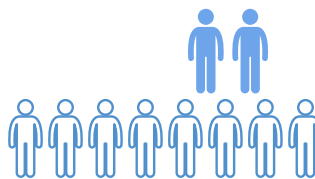
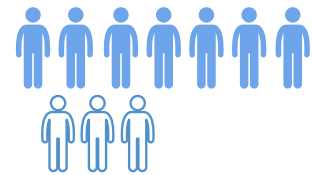
An unhealthy artery or blood vessel in your body contains cholesterol, fat, and other materials that can narrow and limit blood flow.

- 1 Plaque builds up, causing scarring in the wall 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.



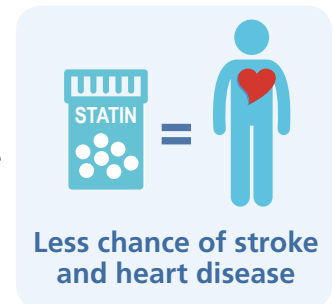
What are the benefits of statins?

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



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

Even if you don't have atherosclerosis or elevated cholesterol, people with diabetes who take a statin reduce their risk of having a heart attack, stroke, or problems with their blood vessels.

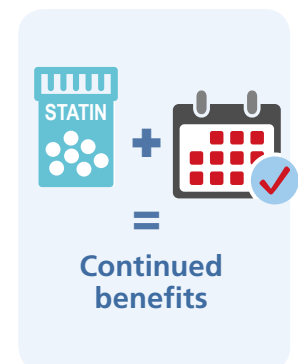


Taking a statin can lower cholesterol by 30% or more.

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.

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



What are some of the side effects of statins?

Most people take statins without any problems. Very few people have serious side effects. The benefits of taking statins far outweigh any side effects. Some side effects are:

- **Sore or 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. Tell your doctor if you have sore or aching muscles. Often, an alternative statin or lower dose can help.
- **Raised blood glucose.** Taking a statin may raise your blood glucose (sugar) slightly. About 1 in 225 people may experience this side effect. This amount is small and does not affect your diabetes control. **The benefits of taking a statin far outweigh the small risk of increased blood glucose.**
- **Changes in liver function.** These changes are rare (about 2 in 100 people have changes) and are reversible. Your healthcare provider can monitor the health of your liver.
- **Diarrhea.** About 10 in 100 people may experience this side effect. This goes away after a few weeks of continued use.
- **Problems combining statins with other medicines.** To avoid reactions with any other medicines, tell your healthcare provider about all the medicines you are taking, including prescription and over-the-counter medicines, vitamins, supplements, minerals, and herbal products.

If you are concerned about side effects, be sure to talk with your healthcare provider.

What types of statin medications are available?

There are several different statin medications. Examples include:

- **Atorvastatin** [ah-TORE-vuh-stat-in] (Lipitor)
- **Rosuvastatin** [roh-SUE-vuh-stat-in] (Crestor)
- **Simvastatin** [SIM-vuh-stat-in] (Zocor)
- **Pravastatin** [PRAV-uh-stat-in] (Pravachol)

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

To learn more about statins and diabetes, go to:

www.heart.org/en/health-topics/diabetes/why-diabetes-matters/cardiovascular-disease--diabetes

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 fresh vegetables and fruits
- Choosing chicken and fish and avoiding foods high in saturated fats (like, pizza, cheeseburgers, chips, cookies and ice cream)
- Keeping portions small to help you maintain a healthy body weight
- Not using tobacco products or e-cigarettes. Ask your doctor or pharmacist 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.

Myths about statins

Statins cause memory changes. Although memory loss and confusion have been reported with statin use, there is no current evidence that statins cause memory changes.

Taking CoEnzyme Q10 (CoQ10) helps with side effects. Many patients learn about CoQ10 through online searches. There is no evidence CoQ10 provides any benefits to people who are taking a statin medication.

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