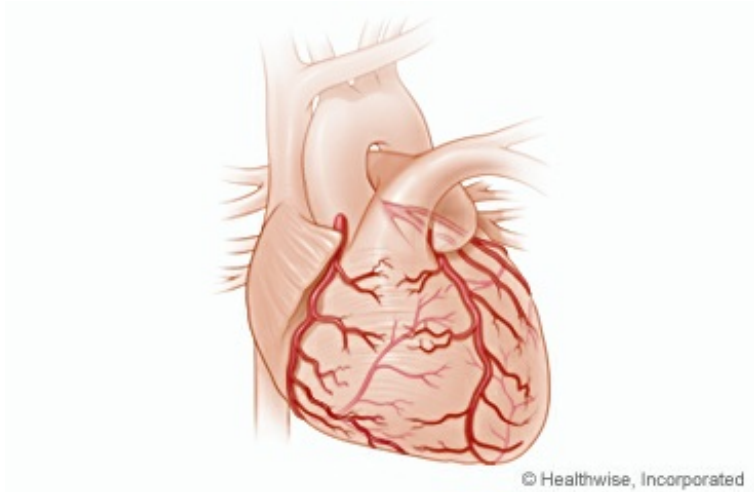


Statins: Care Instructions



Overview

Statins are medicines that lower your cholesterol and your risk for a heart attack and stroke.

Cholesterol is a type of fat in your blood. If you have too much cholesterol, it can build up in blood vessels. This raises your risk of coronary artery disease, heart attack, and stroke.

Statins lower cholesterol by blocking how much your body makes. This prevents cholesterol from building up in your blood vessels. This is called hardening of the arteries. It is the starting point for some heart and blood flow problems, such as coronary artery disease. Statins may also reduce inflammation around the buildup (called plaque). This can lower the risk that the plaque will break apart and lead to a heart attack or stroke.

A heart-healthy lifestyle is important for lowering your risk whether you take statins or not. This includes eating healthy foods, being active, staying at a healthy weight, and not smoking.

Examples of statins include:

- Atorvastatin (Lipitor).
- Pravastatin (Pravachol).
- Simvastatin (Zocor).

Statins interact with many medicines. So tell your doctor all of the other medicines that you take. These include prescription medicines, over-the-counter medicines, dietary supplements, and herbal products.

Take a statin regularly so that it can work well. High cholesterol doesn't make you feel sick. That's why some people may not feel that they need to take their medicine. But it's important to take your statin because it can lower your risk of heart attack and stroke. Talk with your doctor if you have side effects that bother you.

Follow-up care is a key part of your treatment and safety. Be sure to make and go to all appointments, and call your doctor if you are having problems. It's also a good idea to know your test results and keep a list of the medicines you take.

How can you care for yourself at home?

- Take statins exactly as your doctor tells you. High cholesterol has no symptoms. So it is easy to forget to take the pills. Try to make a system that reminds you to take them.
- Check with your doctor or pharmacist before you use any other medicines, including over-the-counter medicines. Make sure your doctor knows all of the medicines, vitamins, herbal products, and supplements you take. Taking some medicines together can cause problems.
- Call your doctor if you have side effects that bother you. There may be different statins you can try. Work with your doctor to find the right statin and amount for you.
- Have a heart-healthy lifestyle. Eat heart-healthy foods, be active, don't smoke, and stay at a healthy weight.
- Talk to your doctor about avoiding grapefruit juice if you take statins. Grapefruit juice can raise the level of this medicine in your blood. This could increase side effects.

When should you call for help?

Watch closely for changes in your health, and be sure to contact your doctor if:

- You think you are having problems with your medicine.
- You have aches or muscle pain.

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