

# Statins

## Could they be right for you?

### What are statins?

Statins are a cholesterol-lowering medicine used to **help prevent heart attacks and strokes**. They reduce the amount of cholesterol *made by the liver* and help remove cholesterol *already in the blood*. While the benefits of lowering your cholesterol are not easy to see right away, they are important in the long run

**Examples of statins:** atorvastatin (Lipitor), simvastatin (Zocor), rosuvastatin (Crestor)

### Who is at risk for heart disease?

If you have any of these conditions, talk to your doctor about how you can lower your risk for heart disease:

- High blood pressure
- High cholesterol
- Smoker
- Diabetes
- Overweight/obesity
- History of a heart attack or stroke
- Family history of heart disease

Most heart disease and strokes are due to a buildup of fat, cholesterol, and plaque in the arteries. The arteries become clogged and narrowed, and blood flow is reduced.

If a blood clot forms and blocks the flow of blood to your heart, you experience a **heart attack**. If blood clot blocks an artery that goes to your brain, you experience a **stroke**



**1** in every **4** deaths in the U.S. is due to heart disease. It is the leading cause of death for both men and women<sup>1</sup>

### What is “good” and “bad” cholesterol?

- **LDL** = “bad” cholesterol. Increased LDL means plaque formation in the arteries
- **HDL** = “good” cholesterol. Increased HDL means good protection as it shuttles LDL out of the arteries and protects development of plaque

Too much bad and not enough good can put you at risk for a heart attack and stroke

For some, lifestyle changes alone cannot lower cholesterol enough — this is where statins come in. Both lifestyle changes and medications are important:



#### Diet

Eat a low saturated fat and low cholesterol diet



#### Sleep

Keep a consistent sleep schedule of 7-8 hours per night



#### Exercise

Regular exercise can increase “good” cholesterol and lower “bad” cholesterol



#### Avoid tobacco products

Smoking is dangerous to your overall health, especially cardiovascular health

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/heartdisease/facts.htm>

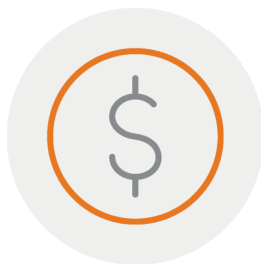
# Statin Mythbusters



## “My cholesterol is fine. I don’t need statins”

You may still be at risk for heart disease or stroke even if your cholesterol is normal.

There are other factors, like diabetes, smoking status, high blood pressure, and a family history of heart disease, which may increase your risk.



## “Natural alternatives are safer”

Many of these alternatives claim they fight diabetes, high cholesterol, heart disease – you name it. But supplements aren’t reviewed by doctors. They don’t go through the same rigorous testing as medications.

This means we don’t really know if a supplement works – or if it could cause more risks.

## “If I take a statin, I’ll get aches and pains”

There is only 5-10% chance of muscle side effects. If you’re worried about a side effect, talk to your doctor. Your doctor can find a different statin or prescribe a lower dose. Your doctor may have you go off statins for a short time, then go back on. This has been shown to reduce side effects.



## “Statins are expensive. I can’t afford another copay”

Brand-name medications can be expensive. The good news is there are generic statins. These are just as effective but much cheaper. In fact, many health plans offer generic statins at a \$0 copay. Check with your health plan to learn more.

