



CHOLESTEROL REDUCING MEDICATIONS

Five Main Categories

1. [Statins](#)
2. [Fibrates](#)
3. [Resins](#)
4. [Niacin](#)
5. [Cholesterol absorption inhibitor](#)

Statins

- Also called HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors
- Statins work by blocking an enzyme in the liver that your body uses to make cholesterol
- Statins are the most powerful cholesterol lowering medications available
- Statins are effective in lowering "bad" LDL cholesterol and Triglycerides while mildly increasing "good" HDL cholesterol

Available Statins:

- Crestor®
- Lescol®
- Lipitor®
- Mevacor®
- Pravachol®
- Zocor®

Possible side effects with Statins

- Liver function problem

- Possible decrease in liver function
- Your liver function will be monitored closely
- Muscle pain
 - Mostly in the legs, especially in the back of calves
 - Mild pain to severe cramps
 - If you have any muscle pain, make sure that you report it right away!

Fibrates

- Also called fibric acid derivatives
- Work by reducing the production of Triglycerides and increase the rate at which Triglycerides are removed from the bloodstream
- Fibrates are mainly used for patients with high Triglycerides

Available Fibrates

- Atromid-S®
- Lopid®
 - Generic name gemfibrozil
- Tricor®

Possible side effects with Fibrates

- Liver function problems
 - Possible decrease in liver function
 - Your liver function will be monitored closely
- Gastrointestinal problems
 - Abdominal pain, indigestion
 - Should take fibrates with meals

Resins

- Also known as Bile-acid sequestrants
- Work by stopping the recycling of bile acids in the intestine and causing the liver to remove more cholesterol from the blood to make more bile

Available Resins

- Questran/Prevalite®
 - Generic name cholestyramine
- Colestid®
 - Generic name colestipol
- Welchol®

Possible side effects with Resins

- Gastrointestinal problems
 - Abdominal pain
 - Bloating
 - Constipation
 - Indigestion
 - Drug interactions
 - May bind to many coadministered drugs
 - Take other medications either 1 hour before or 4-6 hours after taking the resins

Niacin

- Also known as nicotinic acid, Vitamin B3
- Seems to work by decreasing the formation of cholesterol in the liver
- Can be bought "over the counter"

Available forms of Niacin

- Niacin Immediate Release
- Niacin Extended Release
- Niaspan®

Possible side effects with Niacin

- Facial flushing
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Liver function problems
- May increase uric acid levels in patients with gout
- May increase blood sugar in diabetic patients

Cholesterol Absorption Inhibitor: Zetia®

- New medication in class by itself
- Works by keeping your small intestine from absorbing cholesterol, causing a decreased amount of cholesterol that is delivered to the liver and decreasing your body's overall cholesterol supply
- Can be used alone or in combination with one of the Statins

Possible side-effects with Zetia®

- Gastrointestinal problems

Available Drug Combinations

- Allow you to get 2 different medications and pay only one co-payment
- Often priced much cheaper than buying both medications alone
- Provide higher level of treatment for patients with very high cholesterol or a high risk for CVD
- Advicor®
 - A combination of the statin Mevacor® and niacin (Niaspan®)
- Vytorin®
 - A combination of the statin Zocor® and Zetia®

Miscellaneous

- Herbal Therapies
 - Garlic: has not been proven effective
 - Cholestin: natural "statin"
 - Plant Margarines (Benecol®, Take Control®): lower LDL by 10-15%
 - Fish Oils (Omega-3 Fatty Acids): good for additional reduction of triglycerides
- Alcohol: 1 glass of red wine per day can be effective at lowering cholesterol; more is harmful

The most important area of your treatment is Therapeutic Lifestyle Changes (TLC)

- Cholesterol lowering medications only work with changes in diet and regular exercise
 - It is important to know your numbers and your goals
 - Remember to make smart decisions when you eat
 - Remember to exercise on a regular basis
 - It is also important that you maintain a healthy weight
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