

Statins

(HMG-CoA Reductase Inhibitors)

Generic	Brand
Atorvastatin	Lipitor
Fluvastatin	Lescol, Lescol XL
Lovastatin	Mevacor, Altocor & Generics
Pravastatin	Pravachol
Rosuvastatin	Crestor
Simvastatin	Zocor

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About this Medicine

Taking statins along with exercise and a heart healthy diet (low in cholesterol and fat) can reduce cholesterol and other fat in the blood. The build-up of cholesterol and fats along the walls of blood vessels (atherosclerosis) reduces blood flow and the oxygen supply to the heart, brain, and other parts of the body. The reduced blood flow adds extra stress to your heart. When statins are used to lower cholesterol and fats they help prevent:

- Heart disease
- Chest pain (angina)
- Strokes
- Heart attacks.

Generic forms of lovastatin may be purchased at a lower price. Fluvastatin is also lower in price. There are no “generics” for Crestor, Lipitor, Pravachol, and Zocor—thus their prices are much higher. Ask your doctor if fluvastatin or lovastatin would work for you.

How to Take

Most statins are usually taken once a day with or without food. However lovastatin should be taken with food. Take your medicine at about the same time every day. Use care in taking this medicine as directed on the container. If you have any questions, ask your doctor or pharmacist. Do not take more or less or more often than prescribed by your doctor. Do not take double or extra doses if you miss a dose.

Your doctor may start you on a low dose and slowly increase your dose to the desired amount. This process is called titration and is a common way to use statins. Continue your medicine even if you feel well. Do not stop without talking to your doctor.

Side Effects

Along with needed effects, a drug may cause some unwanted effects. Many people will not have any side effects. Most side effects are mild and short-lived. Check with your doctor if any of the following side effects are serious or persist. If you have any new symptoms that start while taking this medicine contact your doctor.

- Gas or bloating
- Stomach pain
- Constipation
- Upset stomach
- Diarrhea
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep
- Dizziness
- Sore throat
- Weakness
- Rash

It is important to stop taking your medicine and contact your doctor right away if you note any of the following rare side effects:

- Muscle pain, tenderness, or weakness
- Lack of energy or fever
- Yellowing of the skin or eyes

Special Guidelines

Before taking your medicine:

Tell your doctor and pharmacist if you are allergic to any of the medicines listed on the first page of this handout.

Drug interactions can increase the chance of a serious side effect. Tell your doctor and pharmacist about all the medicines you are taking including, vitamins, nutrition supplements, and herbal products. Be sure to mention any of the following: gemfibrozil, niacin, erythromycin, clarithromycin, itraconazole, ketoconazole, cyclosporine, diltiazem, grapefruit juice and HIV medicines. Your doctor may need to adjust the doses of your medicines or monitor you carefully for side effects.

If you drink large amounts of alcohol and if you have or have ever had liver or kidney disease you should discuss this with your doctor.

Tell your doctor if you are pregnant, plan to become pregnant, or are breast-feeding. If you become pregnant while taking this drug, stop the medicine and call your doctor right away. Statins may harm the fetus.

Tell all of your doctors, and your dentist you are taking a statin.

Keep this medicine in the container it came in, tightly closed, and out of reach of children. Store it at room temperature and away from excess heat and moisture (not in the bathroom). Throw away any medicine that is outdated or no longer needed. Talk to your pharmacist about the proper way to dispose of these drugs.

Eat a low-cholesterol, low-fat diet. This kind of diet includes cottage cheese, fat-free milk, fish (not canned in oil), vegetables, poultry, egg whites, and polyunsaturated oils and margarines (corn, safflower, canola, and soybean oils). Avoid foods with excess fat in them such as meat (especially liver and fatty meat), egg yolks, whole milk, cream, butter, shortening, lard, pastries, cakes, cookies, gravy, peanut butter, chocolate, olives, potato chips, coconut, cheese (other than cottage cheese), coconut oil, palm oil, and fried foods.

If you have any question about this or any other medicine, talk with your doctor or call the Drug Information Center: 312-926-7573.

*Developed by the
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