



What is cholesterol?

Cholesterol is a soft, waxy substance found in the lipids (fats) in your bloodstream and in all the cells of your body. It is important for the function of your cells.

Where does cholesterol come from?

Your body makes good and bad cholesterol. Additionally certain fats (saturated and ‘trans’ fats) found in food can add bad cholesterol to your bloodstream.

What is “Bad” Cholesterol?

Bad cholesterol or LDL-C is a lipid (fat) particle that carries cholesterol to the body including the arteries. LDL-C can deposit in and narrow the arteries which increases the risk of blood clots, heart attacks and strokes.

What is “Good” Cholesterol?

Good cholesterol or HDL-C tends to carry cholesterol away from the arteries and back to the liver where it is passed from the body. Depending on the amount of HDL-C you have, it seems to protect against heart attack.

What are statins?

Statins are a group of medications that can help lower “bad” cholesterol, or LDL-C levels in the blood if taken daily. They help lower cholesterol in the arteries and help prevent heart attack and stroke. All statins work in the same way to help lower bad cholesterol. Statins are often grouped by their ability to lower cholesterol.

What are my statin options?

When trying to figure out which statin is best for you, your doctor will test your cholesterol levels to know how much LDL-C lowering you need to get to your goal. Medications in bold are preferred/formulary.

% You Need to Lower Your Cholesterol	Statin Name & Strengths	Cost per Month*
less than 35%	simvastatin (Zocor [®]) 5mg, 10 mg pravastatin (Pravachol [®]) 10 mg, 20 mg, 40 mg lovastatin (Mevacor [®]) 10 mg, 20 mg, 40 mg Livalo [®] 1 mg	\$5 - \$15 \$102
35% - 39%	simvastatin (Zocor [®]) 20 mg Lipitor [®] 10 mg Lescol XL [®] 80mg Livalo [®] 2 mg	\$7 \$99 - \$123
40% - 52%	simvastatin (Zocor [®]) 40 mg, 80 mg Crestor [®] 5 mg, 10 mg Lipitor [®] 20 mg, 40 mg Vytorin [®] 10 mg/10 mg, 10 mg/20 mg Livalo [®] 4 mg	\$7 \$102 - \$127
greater than 52%	Crestor [®] 20 mg, 40 mg Lipitor [®] 80 mg Vytorin [®] 10 mg/40 mg, 10 mg/80 mg	\$113 - 127

*Approximate cost estimates based on a 30-day supply. Actual prices may vary depending on your pharmacy and the amount or strength of medication dispensed. Bold medications are preferred/formulary

What are the possible side effects from statins?

Side effects from statins may include muscle pain, soreness or weakness and potential irritation to the liver. Always talk to your doctor if you think you are experiencing a side effect or if you are thinking about stopping taking your medication. For patients at risk for a heart attack, the benefits of statin use outweigh the risk of potential side effects.

How do side effects compare for statins?

Side effects are similar among statins, although sometimes changing from one statin to another reduces or eliminates side effects.

Do I have to take a statin everyday?

Statins only work when you are taking them. After just a couple of days without them, their benefits go away. If you are having problems with your statin, talk to your doctor, nurse or pharmacist right away.

Why are Lipitor and Vytorin not on the Preferred Medication List?

Lipitor and Vytorin are good medications, but Crestor is as safe and effective and is usually less expensive.

What else can I do to help control my cholesterol?

A healthy diet that limits saturated fats and cholesterol is a good start. Exercising regularly, controlling your weight and blood pressure can also help. Finally, if you are a smoker, it is important that you stop as soon as possible. Smoking hurts your arteries, lowers “good” cholesterol and increases chances of blood clots.

THE BOTTOM LINE

Statins can lower your chance of having a heart attack or stroke if taken daily. Generic simvastatin (Zocor), pravastatin (Pravachol) or lovastatin (Mevacor) will provide you with the best value. Crestor provides the best safety, effectiveness and value for the brand-name medications.

Note: Since many medication options are available, our physicians and pharmacists developed this to provide you with information about the available alternatives, as well as potential advantages and lack of advantages of the various products. This medication summary was developed based upon an evaluation of information from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), scientific studies, and input from practicing doctors and specialists.



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