

What are Cholesterol-Lowering Medications?

How do cholesterol-lowering medications work?

These medications help lower the amount of cholesterol in your blood. Too much cholesterol can build up in the walls of your blood vessels, narrow them, and increase your risk of heart attack or stroke.

Your goal for LDL (“bad”) cholesterol should be less than 70 mg/dL. If you have other health conditions, your goal may be even lower.

You and your doctor may need to use more than one medication to help you reach your LDL goal.

What medications may I be prescribed?

Here is a table of the most common cholesterol-lowering medications prescribed and important information you should know:

Medications	Why do I need this medication?	How does this medication work?	How do I take this medication?	What are the side effects?
- Atorvastatin (Lipitor®) - Rosuvastatin (Crestor®) - Pravastatin (Pravachol®) - Simvastatin (Zocor®)	These medications lower your risk of death and another heart attack. After a heart attack, your LDL cholesterol goal should be less than 70 mg/dL. Your doctor may add more medications from the list below to help you reach this goal.	These medications reduce how much cholesterol your body makes. They also reduce inflammation in your blood vessels.	You can take these medications at any time of day.	You may have muscle pain. If this happens, talk with your doctor. You may also see a small increase in your blood sugar level.

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Ezetimibe (Zetia®)	This medication may be added to a statin to help you get to your LDL cholesterol goal.	This medication reduces the amount of cholesterol absorbed from the food you eat.	Take this medication as prescribed by your doctor. You take this pill once a day.	A small number of people may have an upset stomach, constipation, or diarrhea.
- Alirocumab (Praluent®) - Evolocumab (Repatha®)	One of these medications may be added to a statin to help you reach your LDL cholesterol goal. You may also take it if you cannot use other medications to lower your cholesterol.	These medications help your liver remove cholesterol from your bloodstream.	These medications are injected under the skin.	You may feel some pain or discomfort around the injection site.
Bempedoic acid (Nexletol®)	This may be added to a statin to help you reach your LDL cholesterol goal. You may also take it if you cannot use the other medications listed above to lower your cholesterol.	This medication stops your body from making cholesterol.	This is a once-a-day pill that can be taken at any time of day.	Rarely, this medication can cause gout.

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