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The Royal Liverpool
and Broadgreen
University Hospitals
NHS Trust

Patient information

Statins – Medicines That Lower Cholesterol

Pharmacy and Cardiology

‘Statins’ is the name given to a group of medicines.

Your statin is called:

.....

Why has my doctor given me a statin and what are the benefits?

You may have been prescribed a statin for one of the following reasons:

- You have a high amount of cholesterol or fatty substance called triglycerides in your blood.
- You have, or are at high risk, of developing cardiovascular disease (for example, you may have had a heart attack, stroke, or have diabetes.)

Statins aim to lower your cholesterol levels and can reduce the risk of heart disease by helping to keep your blood vessels clear, even if your cholesterol level is normal.

Check with your doctor if you are still not sure why you have been prescribed a statin.

How do they work?

They reduce the amount of cholesterol in your blood. Cholesterol is a fat which can clog the blood vessels and so reduce the blood flow to your heart or other body organs.

How should I take my statin?

The dose you need to take depends on which statin you are taking and what it is being used to treat. It is important that you continue to follow a low-fat diet as well.

It is best to take most statins, however, always follow the instructions on the label.

Do not stop taking this medicine unless your doctor tells you to.

What should I do if I miss a dose?

Take it as soon as you remember. If it is nearly time for the next dose, do not take the one you missed. Take the next dose at the usual time. **Do not double the next dose.**

What are the risks of having a statin?

There are risks and benefits of taking all medicines however your doctor will discuss why there are more benefits than risks for you taking a statin. There are some side effects to all medicines.

What are the side effects of statins?

All drugs have side effects. Not everybody will experience side effects.

Some people may experience:

- Constipation or diarrhea.
- Flatulence (wind).
- Feeling sick.
- Headaches.

If you notice any of these problems, discuss them with your doctor, however, they should wear off as your body adjusts to the medicine.

If you experience muscle pain, or tender or weak muscles, stop taking this medicine and tell your doctor immediately. These side effects are rare.

Before starting a statin you will have a blood test to check your liver as occasionally it can be affected. This test should be repeated while you are taking treatment, one to three months after you start, every six months for the first year and then every 12 months. If you do develop a problem, stopping the statin usually corrects this.

Can I take other medicines while taking statins?

Some other medicines may affect how statins work. It is important that you check with your doctor or pharmacist before you take any other medicines, including ones that you buy.

You may have to stop your statin for a short while if you are prescribed antibiotics – ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice.

You should not drink grapefruit juice with some statins, so please check with your doctor or pharmacist to find out whether yours is affected.

Are there any alternative treatments available?

There are alternatives however statins are the recommended medicine for lowering cholesterol in the National Guidelines (NICE). If you experience side effects please discuss alternative treatment with your doctor.

What will happen if I decide not to take the statin?

If you decide not to take the statin prescribed you will not get any of the benefits. You must discuss this with your doctor as they need to know if you are not taking it and may prescribe an alternative.

This leaflet is not a substitute for any advice that your doctor, nurse or pharmacist may give you.

You can get more detailed information from the manufacturer's information leaflet.

Feedback

Your feedback is important to us and helps us influence care in the future

Following your discharge from hospital or attendance at your outpatient appointment you will receive a text asking if you would recommend our service to others. Please take the time to text back, you will not be charged for the text and can opt out at any point. Your co-operation is greatly appreciated

Further Information

NHS website www.nhs.uk

**NHS 111 - 111 is the non-emergency number for urgent medical advice
Tel: 111**

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All Trust approved information is available on request in alternative formats, including other languages, easy read, large print, audio, Braille, moon and electronically.

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