



Taking charge of your health: How do you manage your cholesterol levels?

What is high cholesterol and what do I need to know?

- Your body needs some cholesterol to function, but too much can be harmful.
- High levels of bad cholesterol can lead to fatty deposits in your blood vessels.
- These deposits can lead to reduced blood flow to the heart.
- Reduced blood flow keeps the heart from getting the oxygen it needs and can increase the risk of a heart attack and stroke.

What are the medications used to treat high cholesterol?

Statins are the most effective medications to treat high cholesterol. They are known to lower your bad cholesterol by up to 50 percent. Taking your medicine regularly will help control your cholesterol levels.

What do your cholesterol levels mean?

Cholesterol is measured through a blood test called a lipid panel. Here's what it will tell you:

Cholesterol type	What does this mean?	What does this do?
LDL	Bad cholesterol (bad fat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes cholesterol buildup and blockage in the blood vessels that could lead to a heart attack or stroke. • Lower levels of this type of cholesterol are better.
HDL	Good cholesterol (good fat)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps keep the bad cholesterol from building up in the blood vessels. • Higher levels of this type of cholesterol are better. • Exercise will make your body have higher levels of good cholesterol.
Triglycerides	Another form of bad fat	Having a good balance between low LDL, high HDL and low triglycerides will help keep this total number in a healthy range.
Total cholesterol	This is the total amount of cholesterol in your blood (good and bad)	Having a good balance between low LDL, high HDL and low triglycerides will help keep this total number in a healthy range.

This information does not replace the ongoing care and advice of your doctor. You shouldn't make any changes to your established medication or exercise routine without talking with your doctor first.

Your lifestyle, your choices, your goals

Each day, you make decisions that affect your health. You can control your cholesterol each day by:

- Eating a variety of healthy foods
- Taking medication how and when your doctor prescribes it
- Being physically active each day (talk with your doctor first)
- Losing weight, if necessary
- Following the advice of your doctor and pharmacist

What are common drugs used to treat cholesterol and what should I know about them?

If you have any questions, always talk to your doctor or pharmacist. They're there to help you and they care about your health. To find out what drugs are covered by your plan, go to bcbsm.com/pharmacy.

Statin name		How does my medication work?	How should I take my medication?
Brand Lipitor® Caduet® Liptruzet® Lescol®, LescolXL® Altoprev® or Mevacor® Advicor® Livalo® Pravachol® Crestor® Zocor® Simcor® Vytorin®	Generic atorvastatin atorvastatin + amlodipine atorvastatin + ezetimibe fluvastatin lovastatin lovastatin + niacin pitavastatin pravastatin rosuvastatin simvastatin simvastatin + niacin simvastatin + ezetimibe	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Statins lower cholesterol by decreasing the amount of cholesterol that your body makes. They don't lower the cholesterol that comes from food. Statins can also prevent heart attacks by lowering inflammation and improving blood flow to the heart. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All statins are taken once a day except fluvastatin. Taking your medicine at night seems to do the most good. Do not take your statin medication with grapefruit juice as it can raise the amount of the medicine in your body and increase side effects.

What are common side effects of statins?

If you do experience any side effects or have any questions, always talk to your doctor or pharmacist.

What are the possible side effects?	What should I do if I have some of these side effects?
The following may occur: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muscle pain Possible memory loss Change in blood sugar levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> These possible side effects can be managed by lowering the dose or switching to a different statin. Talk to your doctor if you have any of these symptoms. If the problem is severe or continues, switching to a different type of cholesterol medication may be necessary. Talk to your doctor immediately.

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