



# Taking Charge Of Your Health: Managing statin side effects

## What are statins?

Statins are the most effective medications to treat high cholesterol. They are known to lower your bad cholesterol and reduce the risk of heart attack or stroke. Taking your medicine regularly will help control your cholesterol levels. Often times, statins are taken lifelong.

For some people, statin side effects can be hard to manage making it seem like the benefit of taking a statin isn't worth it. Not everyone who takes a statin will have side effects. Before you decide to stop taking a statin, find out how statin side effects can be reduced, as noted below.

## What is the most common side effect of statin therapy?

The most common statin side effect is muscle pain. You may feel this pain as a soreness, tiredness or weakness in your muscles. The pain can be a mild discomfort, or it can be severe enough to make your daily activities difficult.

Ask your doctor about	Why?
<b>Switching to another statin</b>	It is possible to switch to another statin medication that may have fewer side effects.
<b>Identifying drug interactions</b>	Taking statins with other medications can increase muscle pain. Your doctor and pharmacist can work together to switch you to other treatment alternatives to help decrease muscle pain symptoms.
<b>Lowering your statin dose</b>	Lowering the statin dose may lessen muscle aches.
<b>Switching to other cholesterol-lowering medications</b>	Trying other cholesterol lowering medications from a different class that has lower or no muscle cramps side effects.
<b>If exercising may be causing the pain</b>	It is possible exercise could make your muscle aches worse. Talk to your doctor about changing your exercise routine if needed.
<b>Vitamin D supplements and if they can help</b>	Vitamin D deficiencies may increase risk to statin-related muscle cramps. Talk to your doctor to determine if a Vitamin D supplement is appropriate for you.

Even if your side effects are frustrating, don't stop taking your statin medication for any period of time without talking to your doctor first. Your doctor or pharmacist may be able to come up with an alternative treatment plan that can help you lower your cholesterol without uncomfortable side effects.

continued

## What should I know about the statin therapy?

If you have any questions, always talk to your doctor or pharmacist. They are 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](http://bcbsm.com/pharmacy).

Statin name	How does my medication work?	How should I take my medication?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• atorvastatin (Lipitor®)</li> <li>• atorvastatin + amlodipine (Caduet®)</li> <li>• atorvastatin + ezetimibe (Liptruzet®)</li> <li>• fluvastatin (Lescol®, LescolXL®)</li> <li>• Lovastatin (Altoprev® or Mevacor®)</li> <li>• lovastatin + niacin (Advicor®)</li> <li>• pitavastatin (Livalo®)</li> <li>• Pravastatin (Pravachol®)</li> <li>• rosuvastatin (Crestor®)</li> <li>• simvastatin (Zocor®)</li> <li>• simvastatin + niacin (Simcor®)</li> <li>• simvastatin + ezetimibe (Vytorin®)</li> </ul> <p><b>Prescription drug brand names are listed in parentheses.</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statins lower cholesterol by decreasing the amount of cholesterol that your body makes.</li> <li>• They don't lower the cholesterol that comes from food.</li> <li>• Statins can also prevent heart attacks by lowering inflammation and improving blood flow to the heart.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All statins are taken once a day.</li> <li>• Taking your medicine at night seems to do the most good.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>

## 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

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.