



EmblemHealth®

Your Guide to Statins

To help keep your heart in top shape

Healthy

YOUR HEALTH.

At EmblemHealth, it's our number one priority. We're here to help you understand statins — the new cholesterol-lowering medicine you've been prescribed to keep your heart healthy.



Let's start with cholesterol.

Your body needs it to build cells, so it's not all bad, but having too much in your body can be a problem.

Your liver produces **blood cholesterol**, which covers all the cholesterol your body needs. There's also **dietary cholesterol** that comes from animal-based foods like meat, eggs, and dairy.

Too much cholesterol in your blood can put your health at risk.

The two types of cholesterol are LDL (low-density lipoprotein, or bad cholesterol) and HDL (high-density lipoprotein, or good cholesterol). Too much LDL or too little HDL can increase the risk that cholesterol will collect as plaque in the inner walls of your arteries, leading to a heart attack or stroke.



Help your heart with statins.

Statins can reduce your risk of a heart attack or stroke by lowering your bad cholesterol and improving how blood flows through your body. They block a substance your body needs to make cholesterol and can also help you reabsorb cholesterol that has built up plaques on your artery walls, preventing more blockage in your blood vessels and heart attacks.

Commonly prescribed statin drugs include **atorvastatin (Lipitor)**, **lovastatin (Altoprev/Mevacor)**, **pravastatin (Pravachol)**, **rosuvastatin (Crestor)**, and **simvastatin (Zocor)**.

The benefits of statins far outweigh the risks. Most people who take a statin do not experience any side effects. Headaches, nausea, and muscle and joint aches are the most commonly reported. Some side effects go away as the body adjusts to the medicine.



A decorative graphic on the left side of the page. It features a large, solid magenta heart shape. Overlapping the bottom-left corner of the heart is a dark blue ECG (heart rate) line. The line starts with a small peak, drops into a deep V-shape, and then continues as a horizontal line to the right.

Talk to your doctor.

Always tell your doctor if you experience any unusual signs or symptoms. They may want to decrease your dose or try a different statin.

Never stop taking a statin without talking to your doctor first.

Statins work silently to control your cholesterol, so you can't feel them working. It's important to take a statin as directed when it's prescribed and not skip doses.

Studies have shown that, for people with heart disease, not taking medicines as prescribed can double the risk of heart attack, stroke, or other serious outcomes.

Stay on track.

Use the following tips to help you remember to take your medicine.



- Set a daily alarm on your watch, clock, or phone to help you take your medicine at the same time and place each day.
- If you have a smartphone, download a medicine reminder app like the Express Scripts mobile app.
- Pay attention to how many refills you have left and make an appointment with your doctor to get a new prescription before you run out; ask your doctor to prescribe a 90-day supply to reduce the frequency of reordering.
- Opt in for auto-refills if your pharmacy offers them.
- Make a routine, like taking your medicine after you brush your teeth or with your evening cup of tea.

Visit emblemhealth.com/blog/member-resources/forget-to-take-your-medicine for more on how to stay on track with your medicines.



Your healthy lifestyle.

While a statin can help protect you from heart disease, a healthy lifestyle is essential if you want to keep your heart in peak condition.

You can significantly reduce your risk of heart disease by not smoking; eating a healthy diet low in saturated and trans fats, refined carbohydrates and salt, and rich in fruits, vegetables, fish, and whole grains; exercising regularly; and maintaining a healthy waistline (less than 40 inches in men and less than 35 inches in women).

If a statin helps lower your cholesterol, you'll likely need to stay on it for the long-term. If you stop taking it, your cholesterol levels can rise again. Once your cholesterol levels have improved, your health care team will monitor them to ensure they stay in a healthy range.



Always talk to your doctor if you have questions.





For health tips, resources, and more,
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