

CHOLESTEROL LOWERING MEDICATIONS (“STATINS”)



Atorvastatin

Lovastatin

Pravastatin

Rosuvastatin

Simvastatin

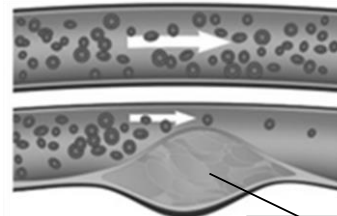
Fluvastatin



What does this medication do?

Cholesterol-lowering medications (statins) **lower your long-term risk of having a heart attack** by:

- **Reducing blood cholesterol** levels.
- Preventing narrowing or blockage of your blood vessels (arteries) by **slowing down or stopping the build-up of fatty deposits (plaque)**.
- Stopping existing plaque from getting worse.



Statins are **usually taken life-long** because:

- Their anti-plaque effect is powerful but slow, and it goes away if you stop taking the medication.
- The benefits in lowering the risk of heart attack and stroke get bigger the longer you are on your statin.

Plaque

How should you take this medication?

- Take this medication once a day as directed. Some statins should be taken in the evening. Atorvastatin and rosuvastatin may be taken in the morning if it is easier for you.
- If you miss a dose, take it as soon as you remember unless it is almost time for the next dose. **DO NOT** take an extra dose to make up for the missed dose.
- You will not feel the anti-plaque effects of your statin. Continue to take your statin even if you feel well. The benefits of the statin will go away if you stop taking it.
- Statin medications have powerful anti-plaque effects even in people with cholesterol levels that are “normal” or even “low.”
- Statins do not need to be taken with food, but some people may find them better tolerated with food.
- **Grapefruit and grapefruit juice interact with most statins and may increase the risk of side effects.** Most people who take a statin should not have grapefruit or grapefruit juice. Pravastatin and rosuvastatin are less likely to interact with grapefruit. Other citrus fruits (like oranges and lemons) are safe to have.



Grapefruit

What side effects may occur?

Most people who take a statin do not have side effects. Side effects with statins are **usually minor**. Some people might experience:

- Muscle soreness, aching, cramping, or weakness, usually in big muscles like the legs, shoulders, or back. If your muscles are affected by your statin, you will feel it on both sides of your body.
- Upset stomach, indigestion, gas, constipation, heartburn (acid reflux)



Drinking too much alcohol may increase your risk for liver problems with statins. Limit your alcohol use if you take a statin.

When to contact your healthcare provider:

- Muscle soreness, cramping, aching, or weakness that is bothersome and does not go away (see points to the left)
- Dark (“tea-coloured”) urine (pee)

Talk to your pharmacist or other healthcare provider to make sure your medications do not interact with your statin (including vitamins, over-the-counter medications, and herbal products).