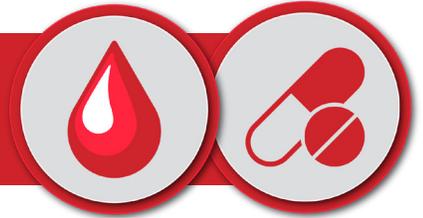




American Heart Association®

Reduce Your Risk™

## WHAT ARE CHOLESTEROL-LOWERING MEDICATIONS?



If you and your doctor decide together that you need to take medicine to reduce high LDL (bad) cholesterol, it's because you're at risk for heart attack or stroke. Usually the treatment plan combines healthy lifestyle changes including diet and physical activity, and medicine.

### What type of medicine may I be prescribed?

Various medications can lower the LDL cholesterol number. By working together, you and your doctor can decide the best treatment plan for you.

- **Statins (HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors)**  
Doctors typically first prescribe statins. Statins prevent the production of cholesterol in the liver, which effectively lowers LDL cholesterol. Some names are lovastatin, pravastatin, simvastatin, fluvastatin and atorvastatin.
- **PCSK9 Inhibitors** are breakthrough LDL-lowering drugs. They bind to and inactivate a protein in the liver in order to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol. Some names are alirocumab and evolocumab.
- **Bile acid sequestrants** cause the intestine to get rid of more cholesterol. Some names are cholestyramine, cholestipol and colesevelam.
- **Ezetimibe** (cholesterol absorption inhibitors) works by preventing cholesterol from being absorbed in the intestine. It is the most commonly used non-statin agent.

The following medicines are triglyceride-lowering drugs and have mild LDL-lowering action, but data does not support their use as an add-on to statins.

- **Fibrates** are especially good for lowering triglyceride (blood fat) levels and have a mild LDL-lowering action. Some names are gemfibrozil, clofibrate and fenofibrate.
- **Niacin (nicotinic acid)** is a vitamin B that limits the production of blood fats in the liver. Take this only if your doctor has prescribed it. It lowers triglycerides and has mild LDL-lowering action.



Your doctor will work with you to decide which medicine, or combination of medicines, is best for you.

Always follow your doctor's instructions carefully, and let the doctor know if you have any side effects or if you feel that the medication is not working. Don't stop taking your medicine without talking to your doctor.

Learn more at [heart.org/LDL](https://heart.org/LDL)

The American Heart Association's LDL-C Awareness Initiative is sponsored by

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