



American
Heart Association.

ANSWERS by heart

If your doctor decided you need cholesterol-lowering medicine, it's because you're at high risk for heart attack or stroke. Treatment usually combines healthy lifestyle changes, including diet and physical activity, and medicine.

Most heart attacks and many strokes are caused by a buildup of fat, cholesterol and other substances called **plaque** in the inner walls of your arteries. Adults aged 40–75 years, with LDL level of 70–189



What medicine may I be prescribed?

Various medicines can lower blood cholesterol levels. Statins are recommended for most patients. They have been directly associated with reducing risk for heart attack and stroke. Statins continue to provide the most effective LDL-lowering treatment in most cases.

Statins (HMG-CoA reductase inhibitors) prevent the production of cholesterol in the liver. Their major effect is to lower LDL (bad) cholesterol. Some names are lovastatin, pravastatin, simvastatin, fluvastatin and atorvastatin.

Talk to your doctor about the risks and benefits of statin therapy if you are in one of the following groups:

- Adults with known cardiovascular disease (CVD), including stroke, caused by atherosclerosis
- Adults aged 40–75 years with diabetes
- Adults with LDL-cholesterol (LDL-C) level of greater than or equal to 190 mg/dL
- Adults, aged 40–75 years, with LDL-C level of 70–189 mg/dL and a 20% or greater 10-year risk of developing CVD from atherosclerosis

Some people who aren't in these groups also may benefit from statin therapy.

What other drugs may be prescribed?

Your doctor will monitor your progress on your statin therapy. If you're having serious side effects or don't have the desired response to statin therapy and lifestyle changes, your doctor may change the dose or consider adding on other medicines.

If you have CVD and are already taking the highest statin you can tolerate and your LDL-C is still 70 mg/dL or above, one or more of the following medicines may be prescribed. They all can be given with a statin.

