

West Yorkshire and Harrogate Healthy Hearts Project

New Statin Prescriptions



West Yorkshire and Harrogate
HEALTHY HEARTS



EasyRead Frequently Asked Questions

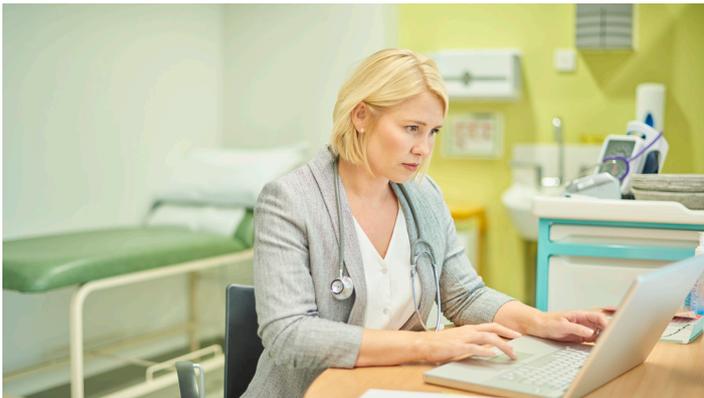
What are statins?



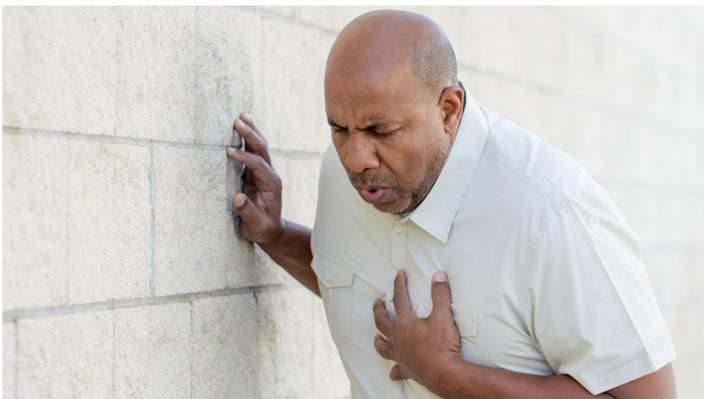
Statins are a type of medication that can help to lower the bad cholesterol in your blood.

If you have too much bad cholesterol in your blood you can be at risk of having a heart attack, stroke or other heart problem.

Are statins safe?



There has been lots of research to make sure statins are a safe way to help prevent heart disease.



The results show that statins can cut down your risk of having a heart attack, stroke or other heart problem by one third.

Are there any side effects?



The most common side effects are aches and pains in your muscles. Most people don't have any side effects at all.



A research study said there is a very small chance that some people may get type 2 diabetes when they take statins.



But the study showed that it is better to take statins to cut down your risk of having a heart attack, stroke or other heart problem.

If you do get any side effects and they get worse then tell your doctor.



Before you start taking statins you might have a blood test to see how well your liver works. This is because cholesterol is made in your liver cells.

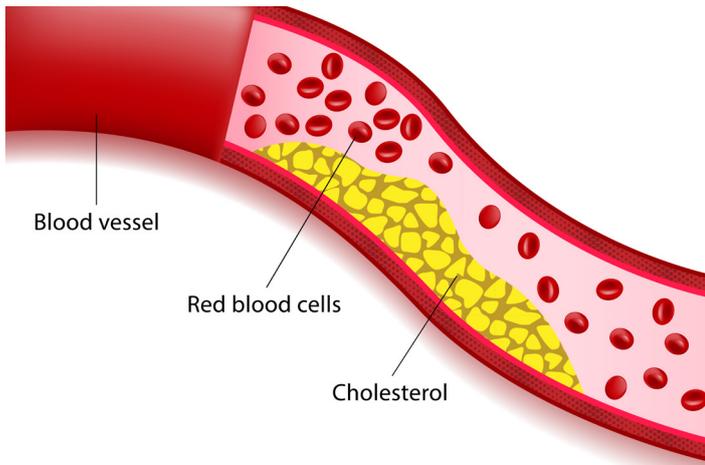


You might also have to have another blood test a few months after you start taking your statins to check that your liver is ok.



If the doctor thinks your liver is being affected by taking statins they might give you different medication or give you a smaller dose.

What is cholesterol?



Cholesterol is a type of fat that is in your blood. There is good cholesterol and bad cholesterol.

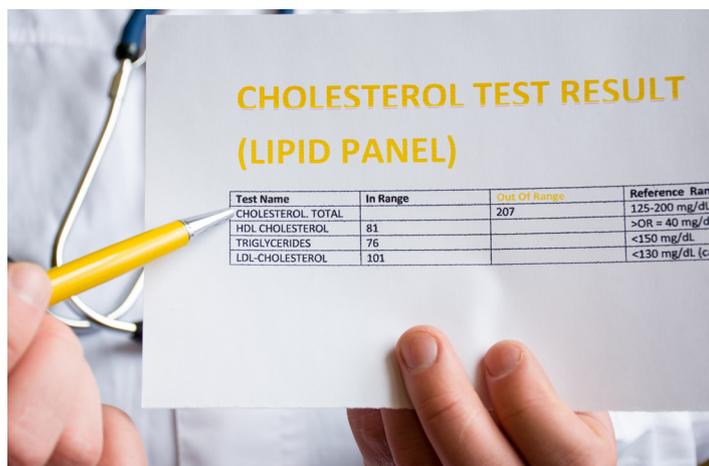


If you have too much bad cholesterol you can be at risk of having a heart attack, stroke or other heart problem.



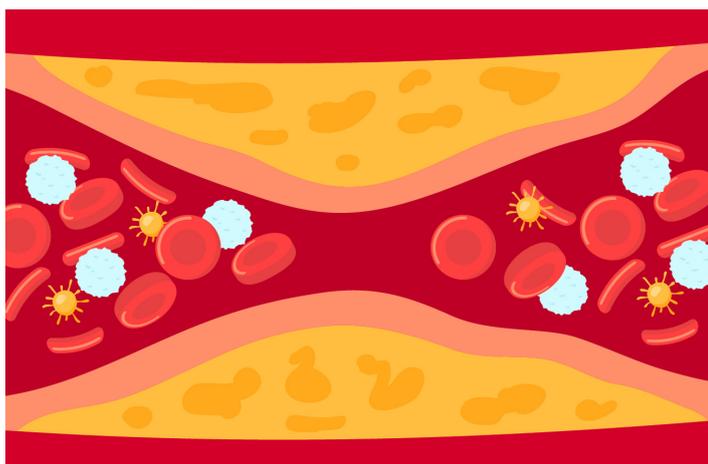
Your doctor has prescribed statins because your cholesterol is too high.

Why do I need to lower my cholesterol?



Your body needs cholesterol to work well, but too much bad cholesterol is unhealthy.

Statins cut down the amount of bad cholesterol that your body makes.



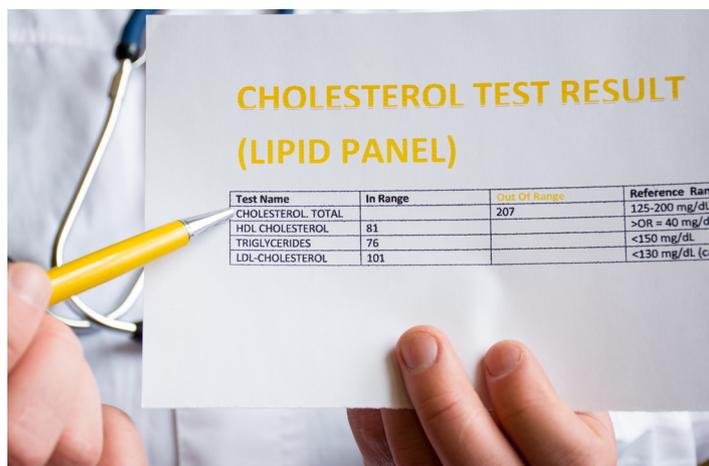
If you have too much bad cholesterol it can block the arteries that carry blood to your heart and other places. This can cause you to have a heart attack, stroke or other heart problem.



If you stop taking your statin then your cholesterol level will probably go up.

You should take your statin every day for it to work properly.

What level should my cholesterol be at?



Your cholesterol level is measured by a blood test. It should be less than 4mmol/L.

But the most important thing is to make sure that your cholesterol levels are going down when you are taking your statins.



One of the reasons why cholesterol doesn't go down is because people forget to take their statin medication.

Statins work best when they are taken regularly.



Talk to your practice nurse or pharmacist if you forget to take your medication. They will be able to give you some advice on how to take them regularly and not forget.

I am already on lots of other medication, am I ok to take statins?



Your doctor has checked your records carefully. You are not taking any other medication that will react badly with statins.

If you have any other worries then please talk to your pharmacist.

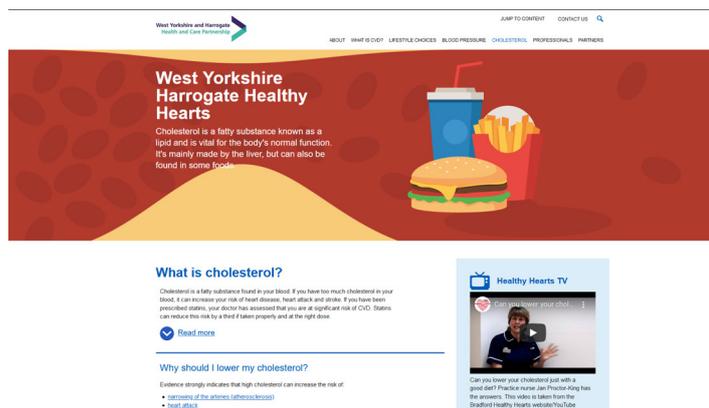
How else can I lower my cholesterol?



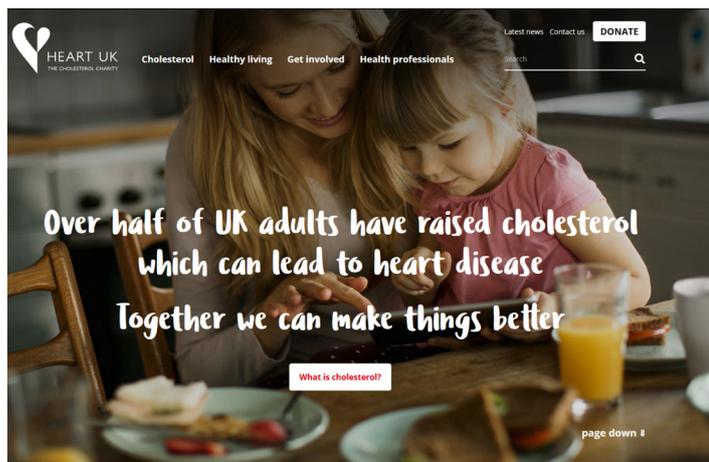
You can also lower your cholesterol by:

- Eating a healthy diet
- Being a healthy weight
- Doing regular exercise

Where can I find out more information?



You can find out more information about statins and cholesterol at <https://www.westyorkshireandharrogatehealthyhearts.co.uk/cholesterol>



There are some links to other useful websites like NHS Choices, Heart UK, Blood Pressure UK, British Heart Foundation.

The website also has some information about keeping healthy and tips on exercising and diet.



You can also talk to your pharmacist, practice nurse, or GP for information about statins.

I do not want to take statins as I have heard they are illegal



Statins are not illegal. They have been tested for safety and how well they work. They are approved and licensed in the U.K.

My GP wants to put me on a statin – do I have a choice?



It is important that you talk to your GP about any medication and why your GP wants you to take it.

You should make sure that you understand the benefits and any risks about taking it.



Don't be frightened about asking any questions or telling your GP if you don't understand.

My GP doesn't have time to speak to me for very long – how will I be able to ask questions about my statins?

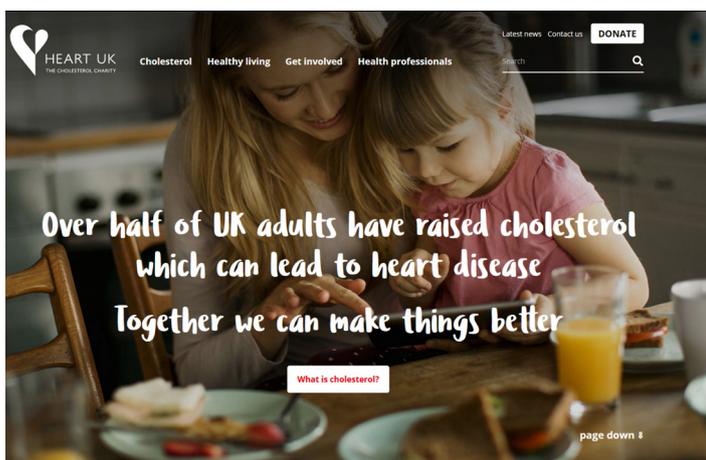


Sadly, GPs are under a lot of pressure and see huge numbers of people every day. This means that sometimes they don't have time to explain everything as much as they would like.



They will be able to tell you the best person to speak to for more advice or where to find more information.

Many health care staff in GP practices like nurses and pharmacists will be able to talk to you about your statins, cholesterol and what your risks are.



Our website has lots of information and links to information from other people like NHS Choices, Heart UK and so on.

Aren't the things I eat and my lifestyle better ways to reduce my cholesterol?



Your diet, exercise, smoking and being a healthy weight are all important to help cut down your bad cholesterol.

Having a healthy lifestyle and taking statins are the best way to get bad cholesterol under control.

How do I find out if my cholesterol is high?



If you are between ages 40-74 and you haven't got a health condition, your GP will invite you to a free health check every five years.

The NHS health check is a free check-up of your general health. It can tell whether you are at risk of certain health problems. One of the tests they do is check your cholesterol.

A screenshot of the NHS Health Check website. The top navigation bar includes links for 'Health A-Z', 'Live Well', 'Care and support', 'Health news', and 'Services near you'. Below the navigation, there is a breadcrumb trail 'Home > Health A to Z'. The main heading is 'NHS Health Check'. Below this is a large blue banner with the text 'Welcome to NHS HEALTH CHECK' and a list of conditions: 'diabetes', 'heart disease', 'kidney disease', and 'stroke & dementia'. A 'Menu' button is visible at the bottom left of the banner.

You can find more information at <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-health-check/>

If you haven't been asked to go for a health check and you are worried about your cholesterol then talk to your GP.

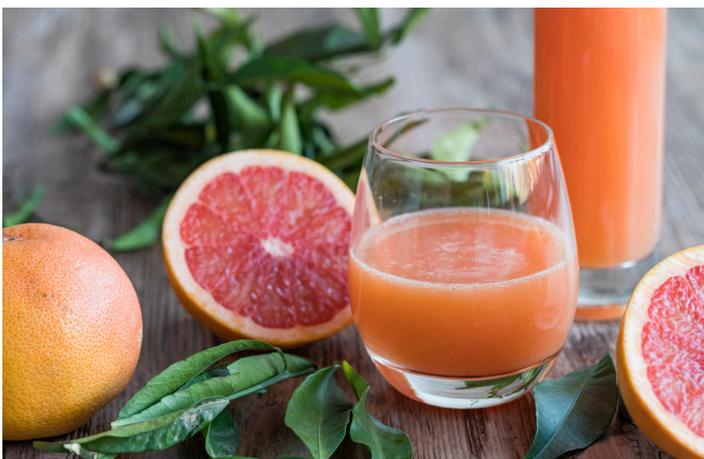
Do I have to avoid certain foods if I am on a statin?



You can check the leaflet that comes with your medication. If you have any other questions then talk to your pharmacist.



If you are taking simvastatin you should avoid eating grapefruit or drinking grapefruit juice. This is because it can make your side effects worse.



If you are taking atorvastatin you can have an occasional glass of grapefruit juice.

btm

the home of accessible information



©btm 2019 and images under licence from
www.gettyimages.co.uk Version151119