



## Statin drugs

Statins are drugs that help lower the amount of cholesterol in the body. Based on research and data, we include on our drug list statins that work best. That's because the best drugs can help prevent serious medical problems like heart attacks and strokes.

### Too much bad cholesterol is harmful

Cholesterol is a type of fat that's found in the blood. There are two types: "good" cholesterol is called HDL and "bad" cholesterol is called LDL. Everyone has cholesterol in their body, but some people have too much. And high levels of bad cholesterol can lead to heart disease and even heart attack or stroke.

### Statins help lower bad cholesterol

If your bad cholesterol is too high, it's important to take medicine to lower it. A statin is a type of drug that can lower bad cholesterol. While statins help lower cholesterol, the main reason for taking them is to prevent heart attack and stroke.

### Your plan helps you access many statin drugs

Here's a step-by-step look at how statins are chosen for the drug list – the list of prescription drugs included in your plan.

### Step 1: Clinical review and rating

First, doctors and pharmacists – who are not our employees – look at the best quality scientific research on statins. They use a detailed report prepared by our pharmacists to review the strongest clinical studies. This report starts with information from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) about each drug's approved uses, dosages and safety. The report also shows how well drugs work and how safe they are.

The doctors and pharmacists also look at information that shows how these drugs work in real life, not just in trials. Finally, they look at all the data to rate which drugs will work the best for members like you.



### Here's what the research says about statins

- Generic statins, especially simvastatin (generic Zocor) and atorvastatin (generic Lipitor), do a good job of lowering bad cholesterol for many people.
- Crestor also does a good job of lowering bad cholesterol. This brand-name drug is a good choice for people who can't take a generic statin or need large decreases in LDL.
- Atorvastatin and pravastatin (generic Pravachol) prevent against first and second heart attacks. Atorvastatin may also help prevent first and second strokes.
- At normal doses, all statins have about the same side effects. They include muscle aches and weakness. The side effects are more common when statins are used with certain other drugs or given in higher doses.
- There is a higher risk of serious muscle and kidney injury with the 80 mg dose of simvastatin. These side effects may also happen when lower doses of simvastatin are used with certain drugs. Ask your pharmacist or doctor for more details.
- Pravastatin has the lowest number of interactions with other drugs.

The names of some common statins are listed in the table below. A ✓ in this table means the drug is proven to work well.

If you have diabetes, be sure to take your medicine and keep up with doctor visits.

Drug Name	Helps prevent first heart attack	Helps prevent second heart attack	Helps prevent first stroke	Helps prevent second stroke
atorvastatin and Lipitor	✓	✓	✓	✓
pravastatin and Pravachol	✓	✓		✓
Crestor	✓		✓	
simvastatin and Zocor		✓		✓
Atoprev, lovastatin and Mevacor	✓			
fluvastatin, Lescol and Lescol XL		✓		
Livalo	Research has yet to prove that Livalo prevents heart attacks or strokes.			

### Step 2: Cost review

Next, we use the drug ratings from the first step. We look at how often doctors choose the best-rated drugs for patients. Then, we review drug costs to make sure the best medicines are affordable for you. We consider drug costs only after we've looked at how well the drugs work.

### Step 3: Choosing drugs

Next, we choose statins for the drug list that are safe, work well and offer the best value. We decided these drugs should be added to the drug list:

Lower Cost (generics)	Medium Cost	Higher Cost
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>atorvastatin (generic Lipitor)</li> <li>fluvastatin (generic Lescol)</li> <li>lovastatin (generic Mevacor)</li> <li>pravastatin (generic Pravachol)</li> <li>simvastatin (generic Zocor)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Crestor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Atoprev</li> <li>Lescol and Lescol XL</li> <li>Lipitor</li> <li>Livalo</li> <li>Mevacor</li> <li>Pravachol</li> <li>Zocor</li> </ul>

### Talk to your doctor about taking statins

It's important to take charge of your health if you have high cholesterol. Talk to your doctor to see if a statin is right for you. Here are some other things you can do to stay healthy:

- Control your blood pressure.
- Exercise and maintain a healthy weight.
- If you smoke, try to quit.



**Visit this website to learn more**

**American Heart Association: [hearthub.org](http://hearthub.org)**

The HeartHub website has lots of tools and articles on heart disease and stroke. It also has good information about lowering cholesterol.

