

# Cholesterol Medicines

## Treating High Cholesterol

Heart disease is a common health problem in the U.S. And, if you have chronic kidney disease, you are at a higher risk for heart disease than most. Keeping your heart healthy can help extend your life. Taking cholesterol medicines if your doctor prescribes them is one step you can take each day to protect your heart.

Eating a healthy diet is another way you can protect your heart. To learn about good food choices, visit the Nutrition Room.

Staying active is also a great choice for heart health! To learn more about staying active with kidney disease, visit the Social Services Room.

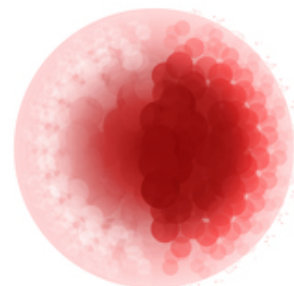


## Cholesterol Forms Part of Your Cells

Your body needs some cholesterol. This waxy fat is used to make up part of the outer wall (membrane) of each cell in your body. It also:

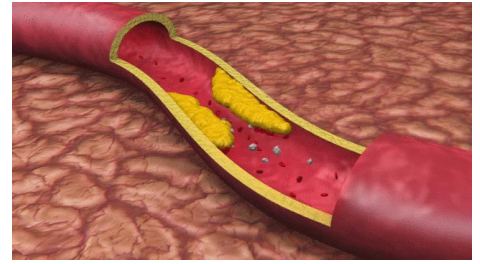
- helps make bile so you can digest your food
- helps your body convert vitamin D to its active form
- acts as a building block for other hormones

Your liver makes cholesterol—mostly at night while you sleep—and helps recycle it to be sure you have enough.



## High Cholesterol May Clog Your Arteries

Some people have too much cholesterol in their blood. Studies have linked high cholesterol with clogged arteries that can damage your heart. If your blood cholesterol levels are high, your doctor may prescribe medicine to help lower it.



## Treating High Cholesterol with Statins

Medicines called statins are often used to help lower cholesterol. They work in your liver to keep cholesterol from forming. And, some studies have found that they can help melt away cholesterol plaques that have formed in your arteries. Statins may help reduce inflammation that can damage blood vessel walls. They may also reduce the rate of some types of cancer.



## Report New Muscle Pain to Your Care Team

The most common side effects seen with statins are muscle aches and pains. In very rare cases, this can be due to a problem called rhabdomyolysis—a breakdown of muscle tissue throughout the body. If this happens, the wastes that result could cause sudden kidney failure. If you have muscle pain or weakness with vomiting and confusion, contact your health care team right away.



## Statins + Fibrates = Greater Risk

When statins and cholesterol medicines called “fibrates” are both taken, the risk of severe muscle side effects is higher. Talk to your doctor if you take a medicine that has “fibrate” or “fibrozil” in its generic name along with a statin. Your doctor may need to change your dose or take you off one of the medicines to protect your kidneys.



## CoQ10 Supplements

Taking statins can block coenzyme CoQ10 in your body. CoQ10 is a bit like a vitamin. It works inside all of your cells and is key to 95% of your body’s energy. A lack of CoQ10 has been found to be a factor in heart disease. Low levels can make you feel very tired.



Two studies have found that supplements of CoQ10 can help people with kidney problems. If you take a statin, talk to your doctor about whether CoQ10 supplements might be helpful for you.

## Fish Oil Supplements

Fatty fish like salmon, trout, herring, bluefish, and sardines have oils that are good for your heart! (This works if the fish is baked or broiled. Fried fish will not help your health.) If you don’t like to eat fish, fish oil capsules may help lower your cholesterol. Studies show that fish oil can help prevent heart attacks and strokes. Talk with your care team about whether a fish oil supplement might be a good choice for you and your heart.

