



Cholesterol Lowering Medication Information

Why would I have to take cholesterol lowering medications posttransplant?

Some of the immunosuppressive medications that you have to take after your transplant such as sirolimus, prednisone and cyclosporine may cause your cholesterol to increase. Many patients are on cholesterol lowering medications prior to transplant, if you were on these medications before your transplant you will likely need to continue on them after your transplant.

What are the names of the cholesterol lowering medications that I may have to take after my transplant?

There are many different classes of cholesterol lowering medications available. The most commonly used class of drugs are called the statins. These medications include Zocor® (simvastatin), Lipitor® (atorvastatin), Mevacor® (lovastatin), Crestor® (rosuvastatin), Pravachol® (pravastatin), Lescol® (fluvastatin). The bile acid sequestrants are another class of cholesterol lowering drugs which include Questran®, Prevalite®, Lo-Cholest® (cholestyramine), Colestid® (Colestipol) and WelChol® (Colestevlam). The class of drugs known as fibric acid derivatives include Tricor®, Lofibra® (fenofibrate) and Lopid® (gemfibrozil). Zetia® (ezetimibe) works by inhibiting the absorption of cholesterol. Niacin is a B-complex vitamin that can also be used to lower cholesterol.

What additional information do I need to know about cholesterol lowering medications?

- ▶ If you were taking cholesterol lowering medications before your transplant your doctor will likely wait a few weeks after your transplant to restart it.
- ▶ Depending on how high your cholesterol is you may be prescribed one or two of the above agents. It is important to know that you should never take two statins together, you can take statins with other cholesterol lowering medications but not with another statin.
- ▶ When cholesterol lowering medications are taken together in combination with some of your immunosuppressive medications you may be at a higher risk of developing a side effect called rhabdomyolysis. You should report any signs of muscle pain to your doctor immediately so they can evaluate whether or not it may be due to your cholesterol medications.
- ▶ You should always take cholesterol lowering medications at night because your body produces most of its cholesterol while you sleep.
- ▶ Do not take cholesterol lowering medications if you are pregnant or considering pregnancy.

How long will I have to take cholesterol lowering medications?

Your doctor will determine how long you will have to remain on these medications.

Please direct your medication questions to
your transplant coordinator or transplant pharmacist.



Do cholesterol lowering medications interact with any other drugs?

You may be at a higher risk of developing muscle damage when cholesterol medications are taken together or with other drugs such as cyclosporine or fluconazole. Drinking grapefruit juice may also place you at a higher risk of developing muscle damage from these medications.

What are the side effects of cholesterol lowering medications?

Some of the side effects seen with cholesterol lowering medications include: Muscle aches, abnormal liver function, allergic reaction (skin rashes), heartburn, dizziness, abdominal pain and constipation.

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