

Choosing a Statin to Lower Cholesterol

What Are Statins?

Statins are drugs used to lower cholesterol and help prevent heart disease. Cholesterol is a fat in the blood. There is HDL (good) cholesterol and LDL (bad) cholesterol. If you have too much LDL cholesterol, it can build up on the walls of blood vessels. This build-up can clog the blood vessels and lead to a heart attack or stroke.

Lowering Your Cholesterol

Some people can lower their cholesterol by exercising and eating less saturated fat. Saturated fat is in meat, dairy products, bakery goods, and many snack foods. For other people, exercising and eating a healthier diet is not enough. They need to take a statin.

Before you start a statin, you and your doctor should look at your LDL cholesterol and your overall risk of a heart attack or stroke in the next 10 years. Factors that increase your risk include age, smoking, diabetes, high blood pressure, and heart disease.

Choosing a Statin

The best statin for you depends on your LDL cholesterol and risk of a heart attack or stroke in the next 10

years. Some people with a lower risk will need a moderate-intensity statin that reduces LDL level by 30 to 50 percent while others with a higher risk will need a high-intensity statin that reduces LDL by 50 percent or more.

Warning: If you are taking a statin and have muscle aches, pain, or weakness, call your doctor right away. This could be a sign of a dangerous breakdown in the muscle tissue.

Some statins cost much more than others.

Generic statins can cost as little as \$36 a month. Brand-name statins can cost more than \$200 a month. Since most people take statins for many years, cost is important.

Higher doses have higher risks.

Most people should take the lowest dose they can. The higher the dose, the greater the risk of serious side effects, including muscle, kidney, and liver problems.

Our advice:



We compared the effectiveness, risks, and cost of different statins. We chose these as

Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs:

For people who need a moderate-intensity statin:

- Generic atorvastatin 10 mg or 20 mg
- Generic lovastatin 40 mg
- Generic pravastatin 40 mg
- Generic simvastatin 20 mg or 40 mg

For people who need a high-intensity statin:

- Generic atorvastatin 40 mg or 80 mg

You could save hundreds of dollars by using generic Best Buy Drugs instead of brand-name statins. For more information, visit our free website, www.CRBESTBUYDRUGS.org.



The Best Statin at the Best Price

Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs are in **blue** and **bold black**. We recommend these drugs because they are effective, generally safe, and cost less. Work with your doctor to choose the best statin and dose for you.

- **If you need a moderate-intensity statin, look at the drugs listed in blue.**
- **If you need a high-intensity statin, look at the drugs listed in bold black.**

\$ This symbol means that you might be able to get the drug at a low cost at large chain stores, like Costco, CVS, Kmart, Kroger, Sam's Club, Target, Walmart, and Walgreens. However, there may be a membership fee or other restrictions.

Generic Name and Dose	Brand Name ¹	Average Cost Per Month ²	% of LDL Cholesterol Lowered	Reduces Heart Attack Risk ³
Atorvastatin 10 mg Generic		\$68	34-38%	Yes
Atorvastatin 20 mg Generic		\$100	42-46%	Yes
Atorvastatin 40 mg Generic		\$105	47-51%	Yes
Atorvastatin 80 mg Generic		\$100	46-54%	Yes
Atorvastatin 10 mg	Lipitor	\$175	34-38%	Yes
Atorvastatin 20 mg	Lipitor	\$254	42-46%	Yes
Atorvastatin 40 mg	Lipitor	\$264	47-51%	Yes
Atorvastatin 80 mg	Lipitor	\$261	46-54%	Yes
Fluvastatin 40 mg (2 pills/day)	Generic	\$235	25%	Likely
Fluvastatin 40 mg (2 pills/day)	Lescol	\$347	25%	Likely
Fluvastatin sustained-release 80 mg	Lescol XL	\$217	35%	Likely
Lovastatin 40 mg Generic		\$67 \$	31%	Yes
Lovastatin sustained-release 40 mg	Altoprev	\$652	31%	Yes

Generic Name and Dose	Brand Name ¹	Average Cost Per Month ²	% of LDL Cholesterol Lowered	Reduces Heart Attack Risk ³
Pitavastatin 2 mg	Livalo	\$173	28-40%	Unknown
Pitavastatin 4 mg	Livalo	\$170	41%-45%	Unknown
Pravastatin 40 mg Generic		\$36 \$	26-34%	Yes
Pravastatin 80 mg	Generic	\$67 \$	37%	Yes
Pravastatin 40 mg	Pravachol	\$205	26-34%	Yes
Pravastatin 80 mg	Pravachol	\$203	37%	Yes
Rosuvastatin 5 mg	Crestor	\$205	39-46%	Yes
Rosuvastatin 10 mg	Crestor	\$201	39-46%	Yes
Rosuvastatin 20 mg	Crestor	\$207	52-55%	Yes
Rosuvastatin 40 mg	Crestor	\$203	55-60%	Yes
Simvastatin 20 mg Generic		\$71 \$	30-40%	Yes
Simvastatin 40 mg Generic		\$68 \$	35-45%	Yes
Simvastatin 20 mg	Zocor	\$229	30-40%	Yes
Simvastatin 40 mg	Zocor	\$234	35-45%	Yes
Simvastatin 80 mg	Zocor or Generic	Considered unsafe. Do not take, unless you have already been taking for a year or longer.		

¹ "Generic" indicates a drug sold by generic name.

² Prices reflect nationwide retail average for January 2014, rounded to the nearest dollar. Information derived by Consumer Reports Best Buy Drugs from data provided by Symphony Health Solutions, which is not involved in our analysis or recommendations.

³ Nonfatal and fatal heart attack plus deaths attributed to heart disease.