

Statins are the gold standard for lowering cholesterol and reducing the risk of heart disease, heart attacks and stroke.

They are a key part of treatment for people with existing heart disease too. But there is a lot of misinformation about statins.



Here are some common statin myths, debunked:

MYTH

If I eat healthy, exercise, and feel fine, I don't need a statin.



FACT *What we know from the research and experts*

Eating healthy and staying active is important. But for many people, these healthy habits by themselves may not lower cholesterol enough to reduce the chance of heart attack and stroke. And, unlike an antibiotic or a pain reliever, you may not "feel" the effects of a statin, but it's working to protect your heart.



Action step: Combining lifestyle changes and a statin offers the best protection.

Statins are only necessary for people with very high cholesterol.



Statins are recommended not only based on your cholesterol level, but also on an estimate of how likely you are to develop heart or blood vessel diseases. Even mildly elevated cholesterol can be harmful when you have other risk factors too. For example, things like age, blood pressure, diabetes, weight, smoking history, and prior heart events or stroke.



Action step: Ask your care team about your heart disease risk.

Statins cause muscle pain, weakness and other side effects.



Most people - about 9 out of 10 - do NOT have muscle aches from taking a statin. If aches do occur, they're usually mild, affect large muscles (not joints), and can often be managed and reversed by lowering the statin dose or stopping it. You may also be able to lower the amount you take or try a different statin - there are many to choose from.



Action step: Talk with your care team about any concerns and ask which statin is best for you.

MYTH

Dietary supplements can lower cholesterol just as well as statins.



FACT

Dietary supplements are not recommended. There is limited evidence that they can lower cholesterol or prevent heart disease. Some supplements – such as red yeast rice – can even cause harm.



Action step: Always check with your care team before starting any vitamins and supplements.

Statins will affect my memory or ability to think clearly.



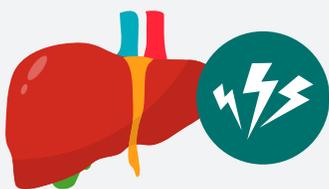
Action step: Talk with your care team if you have concerns about memory or thinking.

Statins cause diabetes.



Action step: If you have concerns, talk with your care team and keep up with regular checkups.

Statins harm the liver.



Action step: Tell your care team if you have liver disease or notice symptoms like unusual fatigue, dark urine, or yellowing of the skin or eyes.

Statins are overprescribed and not needed much of the time.



Statins are recommended based on a person's short- and long-term risk (chance) of having a heart attack or stroke. The higher your risk, the more likely you are to benefit from a statin. So, it's not just about your cholesterol numbers, though cholesterol is an important indicator.

Action step: If a statin is recommended, ask your care team to explain why.



For more information, visit [CardioSmart.org/HighCholesterol](https://www.cardiosmart.org/HighCholesterol)