

My Plan For Starting a PCSK9 Inhibitor



Today's date:

Name:

Date of birth:

Prescriber/clinician name and specialty:

.....

Prescriber/clinician phone number:

Pharmacist name:

Pharmacist phone number:

In general, PCSK9 inhibitors are recommended for people with elevated low density lipoprotein cholesterol (LDL-C) who've already tried:

- 1) Intensive lifestyle changes (diet and exercise) and
- 2) At least one high dose statin
- 3) Ezetimibe

In order to get started on a PCSK9 inhibitor, certain information should be reviewed with your clinician and is often required to get this medication approved. For example:

- Your LDL-C levels over time
- Other coexisting conditions, especially a history of heart disease or stroke
- Current and previously tried LDL-C lowering medications

My LDL-C numbers

My LDL-C is currently: _____ mg/dL

My baseline LDL-C (before starting a cholesterol-lowering medication) was: _____ mg/dL

My history of major cardiovascular events

I have or have had (check all that apply):

- Hospitalization within the past year for chest pain or heart attack
- Prior heart attack (more than 1 year ago)
- Prior stroke
- Peripheral artery disease (PAD) or blockages in the arteries of the arms or legs

Other things that may increase my risk for heart disease and stroke

I also have or have had (check all that apply):

- Age of 65 years or older
- LDL-C of 190 mg/dL or more
- Stent or bypass surgery
- Diabetes
- Hypertension
- Chronic kidney disease
- LDL-C of 100 mg/dL or more on statin and ezetimibe
- History of heart failure
- Familial hypercholesterolemia (FH) — an inherited condition leading to very high LDL cholesterol levels
- Other: _____

Notes & follow-up directions: _____

My current and previous LDL-C-lowering medications

It's helpful to keep tabs on the cholesterol-lowering medications you are taking now, as well as those you've tried in the past. This information is also necessary to get a PCSK9 inhibitor approved by most health insurance plans.

Medications I'm currently taking to lower my cholesterol		
Medication name	Dose/amount	Notes
Statin(s)		
Non-statin (for example, ezetimibe, bile acid sequestrant)		
Other (for example, red yeast rice, plant sterols, etc)		

Cholesterol-lowering medications that I've tried in the past		
Medication name	Dose/amount (if known)	Reason(s) stopped

If you and your clinician think a PCSK9 inhibitor could help further lower your LDL-C and chance of having a future heart attack or stroke, it's important to share your goals for treatment and understand why and how to take a PCSK9 inhibitor and what to expect.



Shared Treatment Goals



Be sure to talk with your health care team about your goals—what you hope to gain by lowering your LDL-C and steps to protect your future heart health.

Think about how you'd answer these questions:

▶ When it comes to lowering your LDL-C, what matters most?

▶ Why is it important to you to see your LDL-C number come down?

▶ Do you have a preference in terms how often you give yourself (by injection) a PCSK9 inhibitor — every other week or monthly?

▶ Are you nervous about giving yourself a shot? What would help allay your concerns?

▶ What level of out-of-pocket cost is of concern to you?

ADDING A PCSK9 INHIBITOR

Together, my clinician and I agree that the best next step to help lower my LDL-C and risk for heart disease and stroke is to start taking:*

- Alirocumab (Praluent)
- Evolocumab (Repatha)

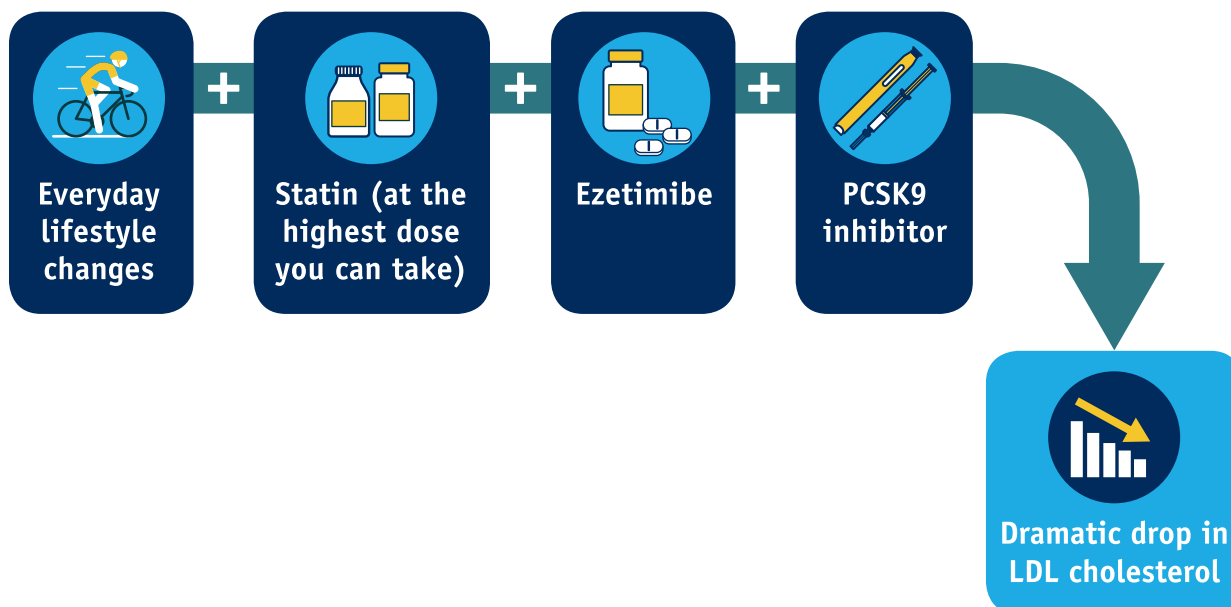
*Note that some insurance companies specify which PCSK9 inhibitor to try first, so you may have less of a choice. Check with your insurance provider to see which one is covered. Tell your clinician right away if you could be pregnant, plan to become pregnant or are breastfeeding.

WHAT IS THIS MEDICATION FOR?

The reason I'm being prescribed a PCSK9 inhibitor is to further reduce:

- My LDL-C level even more
- My risk of heart disease, stent, bypass surgery, and stroke
- Other: _____

PCSK9 inhibitors can lead to dramatic drops in LDL-C numbers



HOW SHOULD THIS MEDICATION BE TAKEN?

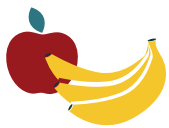
- _____ mg injected under the skin once every 2 weeks starting on _____ (Date)
- _____ mg injected under the skin once a month starting on _____ (Date)

Are adjustments needed to my other LDL-C lowering treatments?

Your clinician will likely recommend that you continue taking your statin(s) or other cholesterol-lowering medication.

Unless otherwise instructed, I should continue taking my:			
	Name:	Dose:	When to take:
Statin			
Non-statin (ezetimibe, bile acid sequestrant)			
Other:			

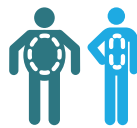
I should also be sure to make healthy lifestyle choices:



Eat a heart healthy diet



Stay active



Maintain a healthy weight



Get sufficient sleep



Reduce stress

To get the most benefit from your PCSK9 inhibitor, it should be coupled with healthy lifestyle changes and other cholesterol-lowering medications, as appropriate.

When it comes to how to take this medicine, people who started taking a PCSK9 inhibitor also say it is important to know:



You'll most likely be taking this medication over the long haul, if not for life, so it's important to understand how and when to take it. Carefully read the information that comes with this medication (called the "Patient Information and Instructions for Use") before starting it, and each time you get a refill.



Because it's not a medication taken daily, you should create a reminder system that works for you. Many people mark the dates on their calendar and set reminders on their smartphone as back up. Some people say they choose injection dates of the 1st and 15th of every month to keep it simple.



PCSK9 inhibitors are given under the skin, usually in your thigh or abdomen. If you're like many other people, you may not be a big fan of needles or the thought of giving yourself an injection. While it takes a little getting used to, the anticipation is often the worst part.

Here's some advice:

- The medicine comes in a prefilled syringe, a special pen injector or other delivery device
- Take the medicine out of the refrigerator for 30 minutes before you plan to give it to yourself so it comes to room temperature
- Alternate thighs
- Clean the area; let the alcohol dry before injecting the medicine
- Enlist the help of a trusted family member or friend if you really prefer not to give yourself the injection



Speak up to your clinician and/or member of your cardiovascular care team if you have concerns about cost. There may be options to help defray what you have to pay.



If you have upcoming travel plans, let your clinician know. You can also contact the maker of your PCSK9 inhibitor to find out if there is a travel kit available.

Other notes & reminders my clinician shared about how to take this medication:

WHAT CAN I EXPECT WHILE TAKING THIS MEDICATION?

If you're prescribed a PCSK9 inhibitor, there are a few things to keep in mind:

1. Getting Approval From Your Health Insurance Company

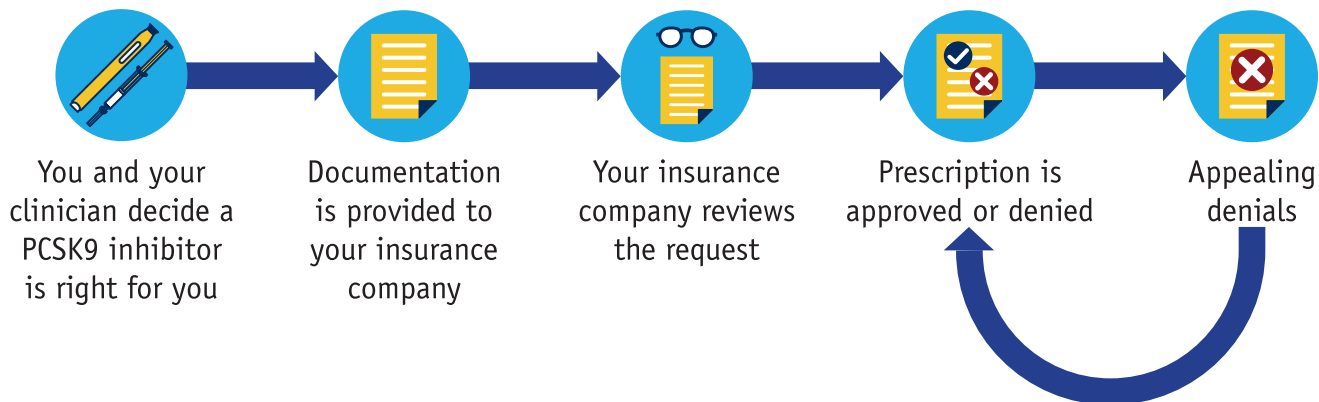
It may take some time to get it — even after your doctor has prescribed it.

Unlike when you've been prescribed other medications, which are sent to your pharmacy and usually ready for pick up on the same day, many insurance plans require a "prior authorization" before you can get a PCSK9 inhibitor. As part of this process, your clinician is required to fill out paperwork that gives information about:

- ▶ Your current and previous diagnoses of heart disease
- ▶ Other LDL-C lowering medications that you are either currently taking or have tried
- ▶ Your previous and current LDL-C levels

If your clinician's practice has an electronic prior authorization system in place you may get an answer the same day. In other cases, the process to review and approve your clinician's request can take several weeks or more.

If your initial request is denied, make sure to work with your clinician to appeal the decision. It may take several requests before approval.



Initial request for approval of PCSK9 inhibitor submitted on:

Date:
By (name):
Prescription: <input type="checkbox"/> Approved <input type="checkbox"/> Denied on _____ (date)

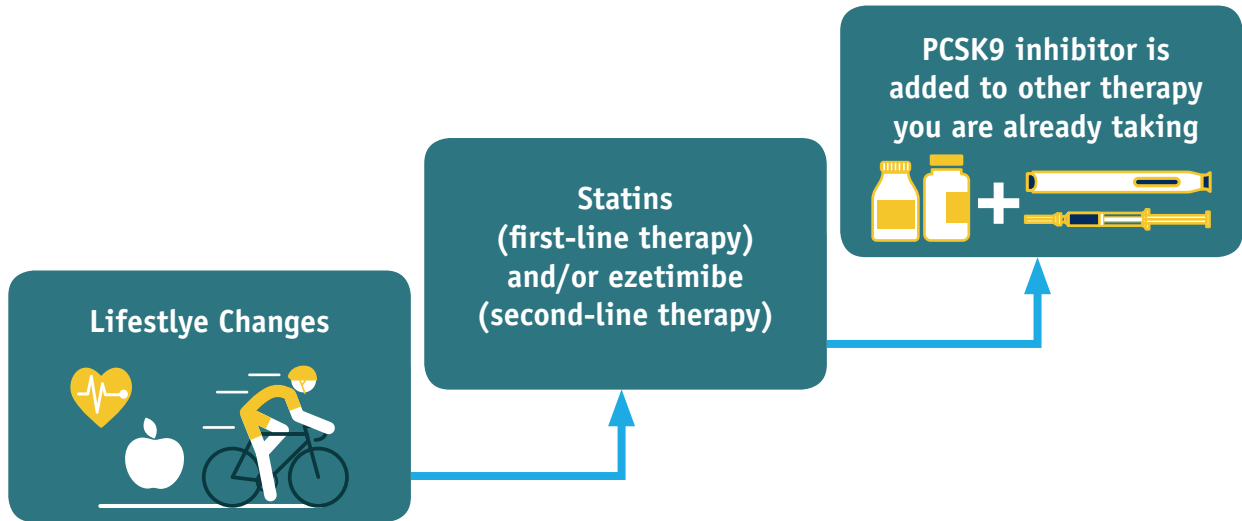
Tracking any appeals: If your insurance company denies coverage for this medication, you can and should appeal the decision.

Date of appeal	Notes (who you spoke with, information requested)	Decision and date
1 st -		
2 nd -		
3 rd -		

2. Step Therapy

You may have to try other therapies in a step-wise fashion before your insurance company will approve the prescription of the PCSK9 inhibitor.

You will need to try or take other cholesterol-lowering medications before trying a PCSK9 inhibitor. In addition, some insurance companies will list a specific PCSK9 inhibitor on their medication formulary. In doing so, you may have to try that particular PCSK9 inhibitor before trying the other.



3. Receiving Your PCSK9 Inhibitor

PCSK9 inhibitors often come from a specialty pharmacy because of how they need to be handled and stored.

Depending on where the pharmacy is located, the PCSK9 inhibitor may need to be mailed to your home in an ice chest or cooler. You'll need to coordinate with the pharmacy and let them know the best days for you to receive the medication since it will need to be refrigerated.

Name of Pharmacy: _____

Contact Phone Number: _____

Prescription Number for Medication: _____

Other Important Information: _____

4. Cost Considerations

The cost may be higher than other medications.

If you'd like to know your co-payment (out-of-pocket cost) before getting the prescription filled, call the benefits information number on the back of your insurance card. Be sure to have your insurance plan number and the name and dose of the medication being prescribed handy.

Notes: _____

Talk with your care team about cost concerns. You can also find out if you qualify for:

- ▶ Prescription savings or copay cards
 - ▶ Visit the manufacturer web sites to access copay cards and eligibility criteria
 - Praluent.com/copay-and-patient-assistance
 - Repatha.com/insurance-coverage/
- ▶ Prescription Assistance Programs (PAPs) and other discount programs may also provide help to those who qualify

For more resources, visit CardioSmart.org/Drugs-and-Treatments/Drug-Costs-Support

5. Follow instructions and ask for help if you are unsure

Your clinician will show you how to take this medicine. Schedule an appointment when you receive your medication.

Your may also be given written instructions to review and videos to watch.

6. A word on side effects

As with other medications, you should watch for and report any new symptoms and side effects.

This medication is usually tolerated well.

- ▶ A small number of individuals will experience a mild injection site reaction (for example, redness, warmth, pain).
- ▶ Be sure to tell your clinician if you have bothersome or unusual symptoms that you think may be related to the medication.
- ▶ Common side effects are listed on the information page or insert that comes with your medication.
- ▶ Use this space to write down any side effects or new symptoms and how often they occur. Be sure to share with your clinician.

Follow-Up Health Visits



Blood tests will be ordered to recheck your LDL-C level to see:

- 1) How well this medication is working and/or
- 2) If the dose needs to be adjusted

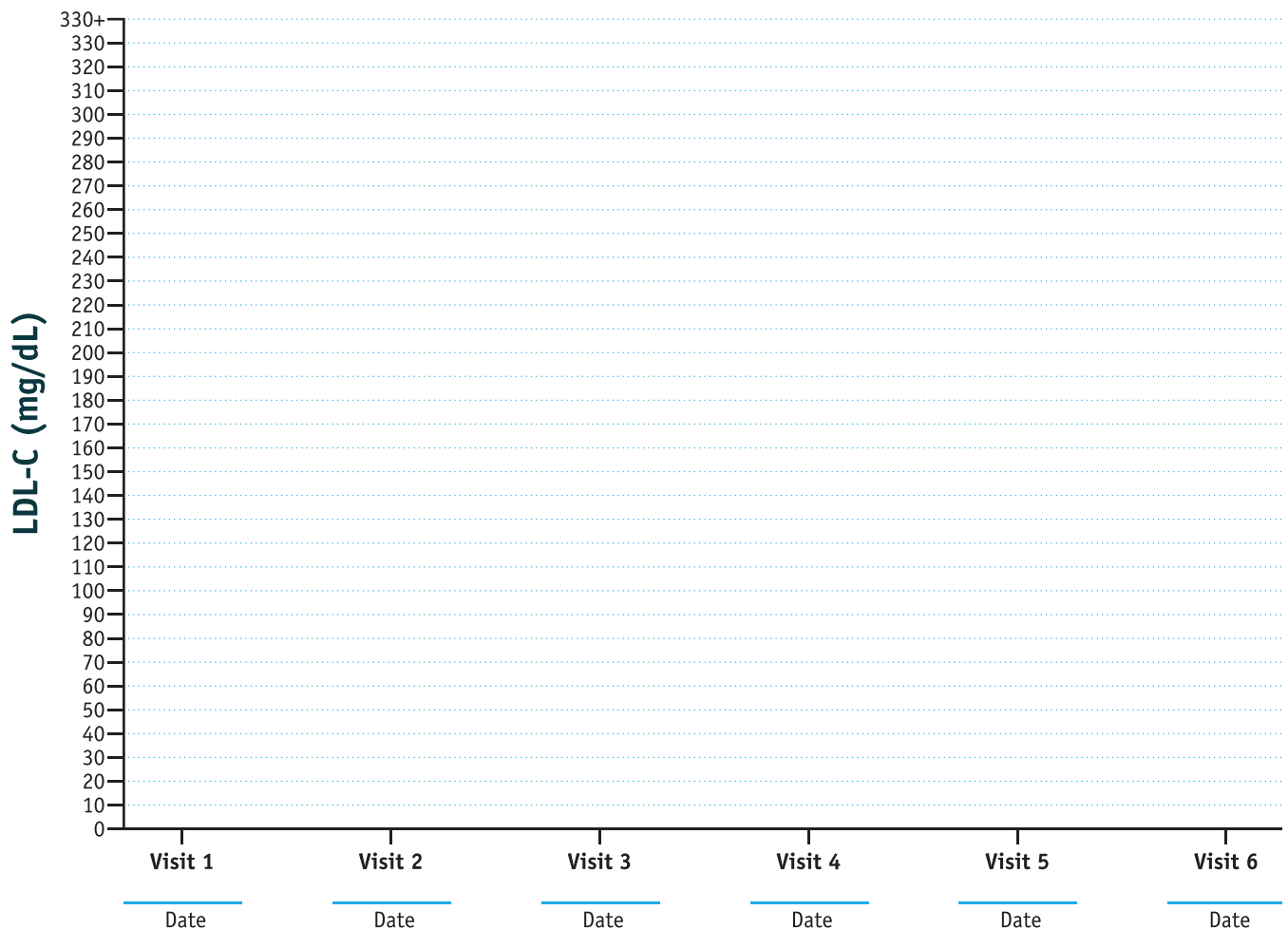
I should get my next lab test on: _____

I should have my LDL-C checked every: _____ months

Repeat testing of your blood cholesterol is essential to help tailor your treatment, and the results can be a big motivator too.

"My numbers dropped right away, which has been a huge motivator."

Tracking My LDL-C Levels



Date	Your LDL-C

Date	Your LDL-C

Questions to Ask

It's important to bring a list of questions and concerns to each appointment. Using the notes page on your smartphone can help keep you organized.

Be prepared to tell your clinician about:

- How you're feeling
- Any changes to your health history
- New symptoms or medication concerns (for example, side effects, cost)

I still have questions about:

Things that make it easy or hard to take this medication

What makes it easy for me to take my PCSK9 inhibitor?

What makes it hard for me to take my PCSK9 inhibitor?

For More Information

CardioSmart has a wealth of information and tools available:

"Beyond Statins: What You Need to Know About Other LDL Cholesterol Treatments"

CardioSmart.org/Non-Statins

"High Cholesterol"

CardioSmart.org/HighCholesterol

CardioSmart.org



My clinician and I discussed my options to further reduce my LDL cholesterol and decided that adding a PCSK9 inhibitor is the best next step.

I understand that I should:

- Carefully read the “Patient Information and Instructions for Use” before starting the medication.
- Make sure that I’m storing my medication correctly based on the information provided.
- Continue to make heart healthy lifestyle choices — PCSK9 inhibitors should be added to, and not replace, heart healthy lifestyle changes.
- Take my other medications, as prescribed, unless my clinician says otherwise.
- Manage other risk factors that make heart disease or stroke more likely.
- Pick a specific day of the week or month — perhaps pay-day Fridays — to take my PCSK9 inhibitor
 - Mark it on my calendar and set an alert on my phone or other device.
- Schedule and keep all appointments to get blood work or other lab tests done.
 - The results of these tests can give me and my clinician important information to help make sure I’m on the right treatment and that the PCSK9 inhibitor is working as intended.
- Always report any issues or concerns to my clinician, including difficulty affording the medication.
- Tell my regular pharmacy and other clinicians that I started taking this medication.
- Be my own best advocate:
 - It can take time for some insurance companies to approve this medication and, in some cases, they can decide which one needs to be started first.
 - Keep careful records and appeal denials.
- Remember that my clinician can be a great partner in helping me navigate the process of trying to obtain a PCSK9 inhibitor.