



Statin Drugs Cholesterol Drugs Friend or Foe?

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In a world where miracle drugs are highly sought after, not for their healing effects, but for the monetary rewards of marketing them, statin drugs have rose to the top of the list. High cholesterol has become an epidemic in our society, and because it is known as a precursor to heart disease, our number 1 killer, finding ways to control it is a pharmaceutical manufacturer's dream. It seems like a very noble cause to develop a drug that effectively lowers cholesterol, and then to go on a campaign to market it to millions of Americans across the country. But when the motive for marketing the medication is purely financial, much of the truth becomes lost or distorted. Such is the case with cholesterol and statin drugs, let me fill you on a few facts so you can decide for yourself...

Cholesterol is found in every cell membrane in our body, it provides the cells with a waterproof barrier encasing the interior life of the cell. When the cholesterol levels become low your cells become porous disrupting the cells natural balance, and allowing toxins and chemicals to more easily enter the cell. Cholesterol has many more important roles in the body, let me list some:

- Cholesterol is needed by the body to manufacture Vitamin D, which in turn, is needed for proper calcium absorption by the body. Both low cholesterol and low calcium levels have been linked to higher rates of cancer in the body.
- Cholesterol is needed to manufacture bile salts which are needed for fat digestion. Low cholesterol is linked to having difficulty digesting fats.
- Cholesterol helps to engulf and remove toxins from your body. High cholesterol levels may be due to high exposure of chemicals in your environment.
- Cholesterol functions as an antioxidant further protecting all the cells from cancer.
- Cholesterol is vital to neurological function; it plays a key role in the formation of memory by the brain.
- Cholesterol is a precursor to all hormones produced in the adrenal glands. The adrenal glands produce estrogen, testosterone and progesterone out of cholesterol. It is needed for the production of the adrenal hormones that balance blood sugar, mineral levels, equip our body to handle stress, and control inflammation.
- Cholesterol is needed for the uptake of hormones by the brain, including serotonin the body's feel good hormone. Cholesterol is the main molecule in the brain, constituting over half the dry weight of the brain.

So as you can imagine, lowering cholesterol levels to an unreasonable level can greatly affect the health of your body. For many years it was considered that the optimal level for cholesterol in the body should be between 200-225. In the interest of selling more statin drugs, the pharmaceutical industry has led a campaign to lower the excepted levels to between 160-185. Now they are pushing for even lower numbers, I have had many clients come in my office with cholesterol numbers being held between 110-150, by way of their medication.

Cancer Risk and low cholesterol: Remember from above, that cholesterol helps protect the cells from the harmful effects of toxins and environmental pollutants. It also helps in the production of Vitamin D to help with calcium uptake by the cells. Both factors play a role in your risk of getting cancer. Low levels of cholesterol below 160 greatly increases your risk of cancer, with the highest risk being those with cholesterol levels lower than 140. Because cancer takes a long time to develop, and the trials on statin drugs are no longer than 2-3 years, this risk has been avoided in their reports.

Statin drugs and their side effects...

Now that you understand the importance of proper cholesterol levels in the body, it is easy to understand why the use of statin drugs to lower cholesterol may cause a variety of side effects. Take a look at this list of side effects and compare it to the list above on the functions of cholesterol in the body and I think you will understand the problem.

- Cognitive impairment – memory loss, inability to recall recent events, slurred speech, or stammer.
- Dizziness
- Cancer
- Pancreatitis
- Depression
- Heart failure
- Neuropathy – The use of statin drugs often causes permanent nerve damage known as peripheral neuropathy. This is characterized by weakness, numbness, tingling or pain in the hands and feet.
- Muscle Pain and weakness – Aside from offsetting the body's ability to control inflammation, and proper mineral levels needed for a healthy structural system, the statin drugs also block the production of an important enzyme called CO-Q10.

While the makers of statin drugs claim only a 2-3 % reporting of muscle problems while on statin drugs, independent studies site a 98% complaint rate of these symptoms. From my personal observation over the years, almost all my clients on statin drugs noticed an increase in muscle aches and weakness following the start of their medication.

CO-Q10 is an essential enzyme for the production of energy in the muscle, cardiac health, and brain functioning. The heart muscle cannot work properly if deprived of CO-Q10. This makes it vitally important for anyone on a statin drug like Lipitor, Zocor, and Mevacor to supplement their diet with high levels of CO-Q10.

CO-Q10 is one of the most important supplements for heart health. It plays an important role in the production of energy by your cells, including your heart. It has anti-oxidant properties to protect against inflammation, which causes plaque to build-up on the arteries. It lowers blood pressure when abnormally high, and helps protect the heart from damage done by heart attacks. Nature's Sunshine makes a high quality CO-Q10 which is very bio-available to the cells. The oil based 75 mg product, is equivalent in bioavailability to 100mg. of powdered form. Take 1 caplet daily if you have a history of heart or circulatory problems, are on statin drugs, or if you have recently faded off statin drugs and need to build your CO-Q10 levels back up. (stock # 1895-5). For those who do not have problems, but would like to support overall heart health, we also have a 30 mg. capsule available (stock # 4089-6).

Natural Solutions to Balance Cholesterol...

Bringing your cholesterol back to normal levels involves some major dietary changes. Americans have been living on a diet of junk foods for over 40 years! I remember as a child, we ate butter and sugar sandwiches, lots of hot dogs, T.V. dinners and white bread. Big bowls of ice cream, potato chips, homemade cookies, and soda pop were a frequent treat in our house. When we grown up eating these foods, it is no wonder our diet doesn't change much over the years. Now as adults many people still live on fried foods, fast foods, and soda on a regular basis. It is very

hard for the average American to understand or believe that these very foods they grew up on is what is killing them today, but it's true.

So if you are serious about your health, and want to avoid the number one killer in the United States; heart disease, you are going to have to learn to eat healthy foods and give up bad habits. Don't be overwhelmed; take it one step at a time, replacing negative foods with positive foods. If you need some help, there are lots of books on the subject. If you want some personal help, you can schedule an appointment with me to go over your diet and find out how you can start to make better choices. The important thing is to make a commitment to improve your health and your diet today!

The second important thing to do is to get your body moving. Exercise is very important for the health of your heart, and for balancing cholesterol. You need to find some type of exercise that you can do regularly, that you enjoy. Get creative, dance, walk, golf, bike, join a gym, or join a yoga class. Do what ever it takes to get you to move your body each and every day!

Supplements that can help...

Nature's Sunshine offers several excellent formulas that help to bring cholesterol numbers and ratios back in balance. Using supplements, while working on your diet and exercise program, helps to bring the body into balance faster. This gives you better results sooner, keeps you encouraged, and keeps you off potentially harmful medications. Here are a few of my favorite supplements:

Guggul Lipid- In the early 1990s, U.S. consumers were introduced to an herb used for centuries in the Far East to treat problems involving excess blood lipids. Known in India as "guggul," this herb has proven itself to be one of the most effective natural cholesterol-lowering agents ever discovered. Guggul lowers total cholesterol, LDL and triglycerides. At the same time, it raises HDL, the non plaque-forming cholesterol molecule. The changes are substantial; guggul single-handedly normalizes the blood lipid profile, even in people with high initial cholesterol and triglyceride levels. (stock # 904-6)

Red Yeast Rice extract helps to block the synthesis of cholesterol in the liver and increase the elimination of the bad LDL cholesterol from the blood. The LDL cholesterol is the type that accumulates on the artery walls. Because Red Yeast Rice extract works in a similar way to the statin drugs it is recommended that you supplement with COQ-10 while on this product. As the production of COQ-10 may be inhibited somewhat (but not as much) like when on a statin drug. 2 capsules twice daily

COQ-10 75mg. once daily

Cholesterol Reg II Don't be confused on this product, if you read the write up on the product by NSP it says it helps maintain cholesterol levels already in normal range, which it does. But to avoid legal problems they did not mention that the ingredients in the formula are well known to lower cholesterol as well. This product works very similar to the lipid lowering drugs called statins, such as Lipitor, without the dangerous side effects. (stock # 557-7)

Let's look at the ingredients of the formula:

Policosanol, An ingredient in Cholesterol Reg II appears to perform a similar action in the body as red rice extract. Plant sterols compete with the absorption of cholesterol in the body. Policosanol can lower LDL cholesterol as much as 20% and raise protective HDL cholesterol by 10%. This compares favorably with cholesterol-lowering drugs which have the drawback of side effects such as liver dysfunction and muscle atrophy. Policosanol is free of these side effects. Policosanol works by blocking the synthesis of cholesterol. It does not inhibit the CO-Q10 enzyme like the "statin" cholesterol-lowering drugs

Inositol nicotinate is a combination of inositol, a member of the B-Complex, and niacin (B3). This form of niacin appears to have the same cholesterol lowering effects as niacin used in high doses without the flushing and gastrointestinal disturbances. It inhibits the production of cholesterol in the liver, raises HDL (good) cholesterol and lowers both LDL and triglycerides.

Resveratrol a compound found in grapes and red wine, Inhibits the formation of blood clots, and helps to prevent the buildup of plaque on the artery walls.

Artichoke powder (*Cynara scolymus*) benefits the liver by stimulating the flow of bile. The liver uses cholesterol to produce bile salts. They function in bile as detergents that dissolve dietary fat and allow it to be absorbed.

Flaxseed or Fish Oils supply the essential omega 3 fatty acid, Studies showed that additional omega 3 fatty acids in the diet can lower total and LDL cholesterol, as well as help lower blood triglyceride and blood pressure. In addition, it may also keep platelets from becoming sticky therefore reducing the chance of a heart attack. Ground flax seed that is available in health foods stores can be added to foods and provides some added fiber as well. It mixes easily Protein drinks, such as **Nutri-Burn** or it can be added to yogurt, cereals, etc. It has a mild nutty taste. NSP carries flax seed oil in liquid (#3162-1) or capsule form (#1583-6). We have a great **Super Omega 3** fish oil formula as well, (31515-7). Take 2-3 per day, of the flax or fish oils, depending on how much you eat of the omega 3 rich fish in your diet, such as salmon, albacore tuna, or mackerel.

If you previously had a diet high in fatty foods, junk foods, and fried foods...

Start with a cleanse, this will help to flush out excess cholesterol, and improve liver function so it can break down unneeded cholesterol. One simple cleanse, targeted at lowering cholesterol is to combine the following 2 supplements together:

Fat Grabbers - 3 capsules per meal. Fat grabbers contain lecithin, guar gum, chickweed, and psyllium, the lecithin is a fat emulsifier. In other words, lecithin is a substance that can change fat so that it is water soluble. It will seek out and destroy fat deposits wherever they are. Lecithin has been shown to lower cholesterol by enhancing the livers ability to breakdown cholesterol into bile salts. Chickweed also helps to break down fats. Psyllium husks and guar gum absorb toxins and lessens the amount of time that these toxins can be assimilated by the body. It also acts to trap excess fats and sugars. Clinical studies have shown that this action helps to reduce cholesterol levels. (stock # 3035-9, 100ct.) (stock # 3030-4, 360 ct.)

Enviro-Detox - 2 capsules per meal, this formula gently but effectively gets the colon moving so that the excess toxins and fats carried by the fiber can be eliminated. At the same time, it activates a cleanse of the liver, kidneys, skin, and lungs. This is important for our overall goal of achieving good health. (stock # 874-4)

Special Note: When you start on supplement and diet program to help lower your cholesterol, talk to your Doctor about waiting 8 weeks before checking levels to evaluate the effectiveness of your program. If you take a cholesterol test too early, it may show elevated levels of cholesterol. This does not mean cholesterol has increased; it means your cholesterol is being broken up to be eliminated, and can be detected in the blood by the test, while the body is in the process of flushing it out.

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