



*Nicolas N. Doan Van, MD, FACC, Inc.  
Robert S. Greenfield, MD, FACC, FAHA, FNLA, Inc.  
Thuy T. Le, MD, FACC, Inc.  
Arvind S. Nirula, MD, FACC, FSCAI, Inc.  
Sanjiv M. Patel, MD, FACC, FSCAI  
Steven M. Schiff, MD, FACC, Inc.  
Surinder S. Thind, MD, FACC, FSCAI  
Jennifer Lee Wong, MD, FACC, Inc.  
Amarpal S. Chana, MD  
Amanda M. Donohue, DO*

## Cholesterol

If you have been diagnosed with high cholesterol, what should you do? Most likely we have recommended intensifying your life style meaning diet and exercise. The most important factor in diet is not eating calories to excess. That usually means cutting down on saturated fats and eating more vegetables, fruits and grains. The good news is that exercise doesn't necessarily mean going to the "gym." What it really means is that every chance you get, you should move more. All movement is additive throughout the day. So walking more during the day, taking the stairs, and any opportunity throughout the day that offers you the chance to move more- take it!

However, diet and exercise is not enough most of the time. That's because high cholesterol may in part be genetic. That is, genes that you have inherited from family members conferring an elevated cholesterol on you may demand more than just life style changes. Are the medicines safe??

The drugs of choice to lower the bad cholesterol or LDL are the statins. The first statin to be released in 1986 was Lovastatin, to lower LDL. Since that time there have been more than 6 additional statins released with excellent safety records. What have statins been shown to do? Here are just a few proven benefits:

- 1- Reduce the risk of dying
- 2- Reduce the risk of heart attack
- 3- Reduce the risk of stroke
- 4- Slow the progression of atherosclerosis
- 5- Reverse the progression of atherosclerosis
- 6- Reduce the need for angioplasty or coronary bypass surgery
- 7- Reduce the risk in diabetic patients in particular

Most statins are taken at night because that's when the body manufactures cholesterol. The safety profile for statins are very good. Although it's extremely rare to develop a liver problem, we will measure your liver functions most every time we recheck cholesterol while you are on medication.

Side effects reported include muscle aches, but there is usually an explanation for this symptom including Vitamin D deficiency, low thyroid function, drug-drug interaction or a need to reduce the dose.

It is important to tell us before you stop or change a medication such as the statins. Remember, they can save your life.

For additional information, these websites may be helpful:

[http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Cholesterol/AboutCholesterol/About-Cholesterol\\_UCM\\_001220\\_Article.jsp](http://www.heart.org/HEARTORG/Conditions/Cholesterol/AboutCholesterol/About-Cholesterol_UCM_001220_Article.jsp)

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/high-blood-cholesterol/DS00178>