

Offer of Statin Therapy

It has been suggested that you start a medication called a Statin. Statins are drugs used to reduce cholesterol which is a type of fat in the blood. Too much cholesterol causes fatty material to build up in the blood vessels making them narrower. This can lead to blockages which can cause heart attacks or strokes.

Having diabetes increases your risk of heart attack and stroke.

It has been shown that by taking a Statin you can reduce this risk by around a third which is very significant. Most people with diabetes are advised to be on a Statin but they are especially important in those people with Total Cholesterol levels of over 5. Some guidelines even suggest a target of less than 4.

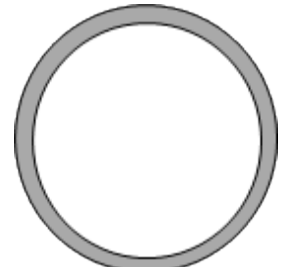
Other things can help reduce cholesterol levels in addition to a Statin:

- Aim to keep to a healthy weight
- Eat a healthy balanced diet
 - Eat less fatty foods, processed meats, full-fat dairy products, pastries and cakes
 - Aim for at least two portions of oily fish a week
 - Eat plenty of fruit and vegetables
- Exercise
 - Aim for 30 minutes, five times a week
- Not smoking

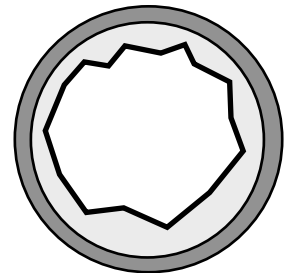
Types and doses of Statin

Atorvastatin is the most commonly used Statin. It comes in 10, 20, 40 or 80mg tablets. Most people start with 20mg and have a repeat cholesterol blood test after 3 months. The dose may need to be increased if the cholesterol level remains over 5. Other statins include Simvastatin, Pravastatin and Rosuvastatin.

Blood Vessels:



Normal



Furred up with cholesterol

Potential side effects:

Most people can take Statins without any problems with the majority of our patients with diabetes taking them. Minor side effects can include abdominal pain, constipation and flatulence. Less common side effects include headache and muscle pains. Serious side effects are uncommon. If you experience muscle pain, tenderness or weakness then discuss with your doctor to arrange a blood test to rule out very rare serious muscle damage (Rhabdomyolysis).

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Authority quote the following: for every 100000 patients taking a statin for a year there will be:

- 190 cases of mild muscle pain
- 5 cases of myopathy (more serious muscle pain/damage)
- 1.6 cases of Rhabdomyolysis (even more serious muscle pain/damage, still mostly reversible)

Other things to consider:

- Not to be used in pregnancy or in those planning to become pregnant
- If you like grapefruit juice then it is best to avoid Simvastatin and Atorvastatin but other statins would be suitable (the odd portion is ok)
- You may need to stop your statin while taking certain antibiotics like Clarithromycin

If you did not get on with a Statin previously:

If you did not get on with a Statin previously it may still be worth discussing with your doctor as you may be able to try a different Statin which is more modern and has potentially less side effects. It also may be worth considering trying a lower dose. You might be able to try a version which you just take once a week.

How to take a statin:

The medication is taken in the evening just before bed. The medication works best taken at this time and should be taken long-term. You may need a liver blood test before starting if you have not had one recently.

If you are happy to try taking a Statin or would like to discuss further then please arrange a telephone consultation with your doctor.