GREENWICH
HOSPITAL
YALE NEW HAVEN HEALTH

ORAL MEDICATIONS FOR LOWERING CHOLESTEROL
PATIENT/FAMILY INFORMATION SHEET

Why should I be concerned about lowering my cholesterol?
Research has shown that lowering cholesterol is a key component to improving heart health and decreasing your risk for stroke. Cholesterol screening is determined by a blood test called a lipid profile. This profile shows two types of cholesterol, low density lipoprotein (LDL) known as the "bad" cholesterol and high density lipoprotein (HDL) known as the "good" cholesterol. You should speak with your physician regarding what your ideal cholesterol level should be.

Who should take cholesterol-lowering medications?
In general, patients whose cholesterol cannot be adequately controlled by lifestyle changes (that is, appropriate food choices, weight loss if necessary, and physical activity) may need to take an oral medication to lower cholesterol. Cholesterol-lowering medications are known to reduce the level of "bad cholesterol" or Low Density Lipoproteins (LDL) in the blood. Discuss your medical history with your physician to determine if you need cholesterol-lowering medication.

What type of oral medications are available to lower cholesterol?
There are several different types of oral medication to lower cholesterol. Each drug type works in a different way. (See chart)

What are the side effects of these medications?
Cholesterol lowering drugs may have side effects. Each drug type has unique side effects that are listed on the chart. You should discuss any side effects with your physician.

What else should be considered?
Cholesterol-lowering drugs are known to interact with other drugs, foods, over-the-counter medications, and herbal products. It is very important to tell your doctor or pharmacist about all the medications you are taking.
Greenwich Hospital Pharmacology Consultation Service is available to answer questions or for private consultation (by appointment). Call 203.863.4365 for information or to schedule an appointment.

Source: National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, http://www.nhlbi.nih.gov/about/ncep
        National Stroke Association, http://www.stroke.org
        American Heart Association, http://www.americanheart.org

For more Patient Fact Sheets, see the Greenwich Hospital web site at www.greenhosp.org and Click on Patients & Visitors, then Patient Education

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Generic Name	Brand Name	Drug Class	Possible side effects	Comments
Atorvastatin Fluvastatin Lovastatin Pravastin Rosuvastain Simvastatin	Lipitor Lescol Mevacor Pravachol Crestor Zocor	Statins	Muscle pain, Liver damage	Lowers LDL and triglycerides. Increases HDL
Fenofibrate Gemfibrozil	Tricor Lopid	Fibric acid derivatives	Muscle pain, Gallstones, Upper abdomen pain	Lowers LDL and triglycerides
Niacin CR Niacin CR Niacin IR	Niasoan Slo-Niacin	Nicotinic acid	Flushing, Upper-GI distress, Liver damage, High blood sugar	Lowers LDL and triglycerides. Take aspirin 30 minutes before dose to reduce flushing
Cholestyramine Colestipol Colesevelam	Questran Colestid WelChol	Bile Acid sequestrants resins	GI distress, constipation, Decreased absorption of other drugs	Lowers LDL. Other drugs should be taken 1 hr before or 4-6 hr after resins
Ezetimibe	Zetia	Cholesterol inhibitors	No significant side effects	Lowers LDL and triglycerides. Increases HDL
Omega-3-acid ethyl esters	Lovaza	Fatty acid	Burping, Upset stomach Flu-like symptoms	Typically used in patients with triglycerides > 500 mg/dL
Ezetimibe/simvastatin	Vytorin	Combination product	These medications are a combination of the medications listed above. See the above individual medication side effects and comments.	Lowers high cholesterol and prevents absorption of cholesterol from food
Lovastatin/niacin	Advicor	Combination product		Lowers cholesterol via two different mechanisms
Amlodipine/atorvastatin	Caduet	Combination product		Amlodipine is a drug to lower blood pressure.
Buffered aspirin/pravastin	Pravigard PAC	Combination product	Aspirin has been associated with increase risk of bleeding	Aspirin has antiplatelet properties

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